



£4m SPENT ON TEACHING COVER

Report by Clare Butler

NEARLY £4 million was spent by schools across Dudley employing agency staff in just 12 months – with one agency being paid more than £1 million.

The figures follow a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, which revealed expenditure on teaching cover across primary, secondary and special schools in the borough in 2015/16.

Casual staff were brought in to cover sickness absences and maternity leave to ensure children did not miss lessons. A total of £3.8 million was spent across the borough.



Abdul Qadus

Around £1.2 million was spent on agency staff from First for Education Ltd, based in Stourbridge. Other highest paid agencies included ABC Teachers Ltd at £440,000 and Monarch Education at £322,918.

It was also revealed that £2.14 million was spent on agency staff across the borough from September 2014 to February 2015.

Schools in Dudley control their own budgets and decide when agency staff need to be brought in.

Abdul Qadus, a former member of the children's board at Dudley Council, said he was shocked by the figures.

He added: "It appears that we are becoming an agency culture and it isn't good. Millions of pounds are being spent and when I was a governor I questioned this. It is quite concerning but seems a general pattern."

Confusing

"If they had proper full time staff then I feel money would be better spent than having agency teachers, which can be confusing for the children."

Information issued with the FOI stated: "The figures given are not necessarily an accurate reflection of the amount spent on supply staff as schools use the budget to employ full-time cover supervisors. Some of the figures will include the costs for permanent staff who are employed by schools but who are paid on a casual basis to deliver holiday, evening and weekend work."

SOMEONE NEEDS TO MAINTAIN THE STANDARD



Ron Greenfield, bearer of the Brierley Hill Royal British Legion standard is retiring due to ill health and appealing for a new standard bearer

IN the days before Remembrance Sunday an urgent appeal has been launched to find someone to maintain a tradition honouring the war dead with a special Brierley Hill banner.

The standard for the now disbanded Royal British Legion Brierley Hill branch has been lowered to remember those who have fallen in the line of duty for almost 100 years. But now the standard could be taken out of service.

The current bearer, former gunner Ron Greenfield, is having to give up the role he has held for 10 years due to ill health. The

85-year-old, who served in The Royal Artillery regiment in Gibraltar, is searching for someone to take over.

He said: "My age and ill health have finally caught up with me and I am physically unable to carry out this most important duty any longer. I am asking anyone, perhaps from the voluntary services or any other recognised groups, to consider taking on this most worthy of duties. It just takes a couple of hours or so on Remembrance Sunday morning at the Brierley Hill Cenotaph and church. Please keep faith with the fallen and try to help."

Mr Greenfield, who lives in Brierley Hill, also takes the standard to the funerals of ex-servicemen. He explained that due to the branch disbanding six years ago the standard would be given to the Staffordshire Royal British Legion branch for safe keeping.

He added: "Despite the branch folding, it is nice to still have the standard representing the closed branch and all those members who were part of it."

Mr Greenfield comes from a family with a strong military tradition. His father George served in the Boer War and First World War.

FUNDING

Chiefs warn fire service faces crisis

WEST Midlands fire chiefs have issued a stark warning to Westminster that the service is at 'tipping point' as cuts bite deeper into their resources.

Phil Loach, the region's Chief Fire Officer, and Councillor John Edwards, chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority, spelled out the dangers during a meeting with prominent MPs at Westminster.

They forecast that engine response times and vital prevention and protection work could be at risk if changes are not made to the current funding system.

HERITAGE

Canal network overhaul starting

AN £850,000 overhaul of canals in the West Midlands is set to get under way, including work on Parkhead Top Lock near Dudley.

The Canal & River Trust is beginning the revamp across Birmingham and the Black Country as part of a five-month winter maintenance programme.

The works, taking place until late February, will see craftsmen repairing historic canal walls, locks and bridges.

INDUSTRY

Sadler's invests £1m in its latest brewery

A BREWERY in Lye is to quadruple its production with fresh investment of more than £1 million. The new brewery at Sadler's in Lye is due to be operating by the end of January.

Managing director Chris Sadler has also revealed plans for the growing business to open a new series of bars across the Black Country.

INSIDE

LISA BACKING FEED A FAMILY



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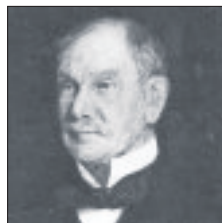
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Museum art treasures to be sold off



Brooke Robinson

HISTORIC artefacts that were on show at Dudley Museum are to go under the hammer for thousands of pounds.

The Chinese and Japanese pieces, bought by the Trust of the late Dudley MP Brooke Robinson, are being sold after the closure of the town's old museum in the town centre.

The centrepiece of the collection is a Chinese Qing Dynasty Qianlong Buddhist Emblem Altar Vessel expected to fetch up to £20,000. There is no room for the 92-pieces at the Archives building in Tipton Road where the museum's collections have been moved.

The Brooke Robinson Museum Trust is to use cash from the sale to buy pieces more suited to the Brooke Robinson story. It is working with the council on plans to celebrate the former MP's life at a display in the town centre.

Trustee

Colin Knipe, a Brooke Robinson trustee, said: "We are disposing of some items that were not part of Brooke Robinson's personal collection, in order to acquire items that are more relevant to the district and his career, and to improve the display."

"With the co-operation of the council, we aim to create a more imaginative and interesting gallery which should tell the story of a remarkable Dudley citizen."

Brooke Robinson was Conservative MP for Dudley from 1886 to 1906 and also served as coroner. He was an art collector and benefactor whose legacy included the Town Hall and museum.

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The council will not benefit financially in any way. We are working with the trustees." Fieldings Auctioneers hosts the sale on Saturday.

Fewer parents in Dudley face term holiday fines

PARENTS have been hit by more than £1 million in fines for taking their children on school term time holidays.

The figures were revealed as Dudley Council's leader called on headteachers to use more 'discretion' to help cash-strapped parents.

Figures released last week show discrepancies between councils for the amount of fines collected - with Walsall Council picking up almost £230,000, Wolverhampton around £128,000 and Dudley just £44,000.

More than 22,000 parents have been issued with the £60 charge over the last five years in the West Midlands, with another 2,000 being taken to court because of their child's low attendance.

Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show Walsall Council has collected £227,310 in fines since 2012/13. Wolverhampton council made £128,200, Dudley £44,100, and Sandwell £39,120. Staffordshire County Council collected £102,080 over the past two years.

Grabbing

Sandwell council took 817 parents to court since 2012/13 rather than issue fixed penalties. Fines collected in court rather than through fixed penalty notices go to the Ministry of Justice instead of the council.

The councils were described as carrying out 'scandalous money grabbing' by West Midland Liberal Democrat campaigner Sarah Quarmby, who compiled the data after submitting the FOI request. She demanded more flexible arrangements to help parents.

Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said authorities had to enforce the law but called on headteachers to use 'discretion' where possible.

He said: "We understand the financial pressures on parents taking children on holiday during half term and school holidays. Headteachers do have a limited amount of discretion that they should use sensibly and when appropriate."

Boris plays a blinder at business event



Boris Johnson donned a cap and declared himself a Peaky Blinders fan when he met Chris Lamb of Sadler's brewery

BORIS Johnson hailed the Black Country's proud manufacturing heritage and its move into hi-tech sectors at the region's annual showcase in the Houses of Parliament.

Nearly 30 companies put their goods on display for MPs at the event, organised by Dudley North Labour MP Ian Austin and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

Foreign Secretary Mr Johnson

was among those to pop in, chatting with bosses and looking at the wide range of products on display. Products ranged from traditional hand-made ironwork by Kirkpatrick in Walsall to alloy wheels from West Bromwich's Rimstock.

Mr Johnson, who once worked as a journalist at the Express & Star, also visited a stand for Lye's Sadler's brewery, which among its beers make a Peaky Blinders ale named after the hit TV drama.

Mr Johnson said: "I spent part of my early working career in Wolverhampton and I remember all the traditional industries in the Black Country, so its fantastic to see so many businesses in advanced manufacturing such as aerospace, automotive, digital media and film production."

Other businesses represented included Boss Designs in Dudley and Wolverhampton-based learning provider LearnPlay Foundation.

Broadband gets faster thanks to major project

AROUND 55,000 households and businesses are now able to access superfast broadband thanks to a project in the Black Country.

Faster download speeds should be accessible in areas including Blackheath, Brierley Hill, Dudley town centre, Halesowen, Kingswinford, Lye, Penn, Sedgley, Tipton and Wolverhampton thanks to the work of the Black Country Broadband Project.

The multi-million pound project is led by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and BT Group as part of the Government's Broadband Delivery UK programme.

Ninder Johal, a LEP board member, said: "The Black Country Broadband Project is making terrific progress, but we're keen for more local people to take advantage and upgrade their broadband service, which they can do at little or no extra cost, to ensure they don't get left behind."

So far, engineers from Openreach have installed nearly 290km of optical fibre and more than 520 fibre broadband road side cabinets for the project. Steve Haines, Openreach's managing director of next generation access, said: "We have also chosen Brierley Hill as one of our new pilot areas for 'ultrafast' broadband providing access to download speeds of up to 330 megabits per second."

Nine new nurses recruited by Trust

THE hospital trust that runs Russells Hall has hired nine nurses following a recruitment event.

The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust has filled the nine nursing roles following concerns about staff shortages and less success than hoped for recruiting nurses overseas.

Almost 100 nurses, midwives and other medical workers have been taken on since August.

The trust plans to continue recruitment with an event on December 6 at Russells Hall Hospital. Candidates will be interviewed, also speaking with staff and touring the hospital.

Trust chief executive Diane Wake said: "We were thrilled to recruit nine nurses to the Trust and look forward to them starting in post very soon."

Car sales at site

A FORMER betting shop in Pensnett will be turned into a car sales base after Dudley planners gave the go-ahead. The site in Commonside will be able to accommodate 15 cars. It was formerly occupied by A2 Bookmakers.

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Centres on right road after buses are sold off

TWO day centres for the elderly have been given a new lease of life after the sale of four minibuses raised £20,000.

The Age Concern-run Elton Day Care Centre in Stourbridge and Green Lane Day Centre in Halesowen have been kept running by the sales, which saw three minibuses sold to charity and another sold at auction for £2,700.

It follows Age Concern's departure from the Mary Stevens Day Centre in Stourbridge after funding from Dudley Council was removed in April.

Chief officer Dionne Legge said: "We are still here serving the elderly in the Dudley borough. Since we have come out of Mary Stevens Day Centre I think people thought the whole of Age Concern had closed down."

"We have a fantastic service in the Elton Centre and we're still offering daycare five days a week but its not located in Halesowen. We're a smaller organisation, we have had to slim down but we're still trying to carry on."

"The minibuses were probably worth more but we don't feel hard done by, we accept that with happiness. Three of them went to charities with one of those to Age UK Dudley and another to Hall Flyers in Wombourne. The fourth and oldest one went to auction."

Age Concern lost more than £21,000 a year in funding.

Work to resume at chicken plant

A SCANDAL-HIT chicken processing factory in West Bromwich will restart production this week.

The firm 2 Sisters says there will be increased oversight of the 850-strong workforce, which has been undergoing retraining in the wake of revelations under hygiene breaches at the Dial Lane site, which made national headlines.

Customers including Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Aldi say they are happy with measures taken by the company and will take products from them again.

The Food Standards Agency will now be on the site 'at all times' and CCTV coverage of operations inside the factory will be monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Sofa fire shock

A WOMAN arrived at her terraced home in Brierley Hill just in time to stop it being engulfed by flames on Sunday. She found the sofa on fire. Firefighters ensured it did not spread but the house had smoke damage.

Winter warmth scheme being extended

ELDERLY people and struggling families have been urged to seek help if they are worried about keeping warm this winter.

Dudley Council has relaunched its 'winter warmth scheme' with plans to roll it out across the entire year as more people struggle to pay the bills.

The council-led scheme is said to have helped more than 700 residents last winter who were facing problems keeping their homes and themselves warm.

Councillor Les Jones, cabinet member for housing, said: "Each year people die as a result of freezing winter weather and cold homes. Living in a cold home can lead to very serious health problems, particularly for older people, young children and people

suffering from long-term health conditions, such as asthma. It is essential that people start preparing for winter before the cold months set in.

"If people are concerned about heating their homes they should contact the scheme's helpline to ask for support and advice.

Extension

"We want to make sure that all our residents keep warm and well in their homes whatever the time of year, hence the extension of the scheme to all year round."

"I encourage anyone concerned about keeping warm at home themselves, or worried about a relative, friend or neighbour, to call the scheme."

The initiative is designed to benefit those concerned about being able to keep their home warm during winter, struggling with paying their fuel bills or keeping well at home through the colder months. The public can access a variety of practical support, information and expert advice through the council-based scheme.

The now year-long bid to help residents will look to see householders save significantly on their home energy bills, as well as advise on energy discounts and grants.

Those wishing to find out more can contact the winter warmth helpline on (01384) 817086 and call to request a free home visit.

Deal to save Brierley Hill's landmark venue

VOLUNTEERS are poised to take over the running of Brierley Hill Civic Hall securing its future and saving the council £100,000-a-year.

It will see keys to the the 695-seat venue handed over to Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS).

The charity has been managing the venue for the last 18 months on a trial. Now Dudley Council says it has shown that it can make a success of it.

Before the charity took control of the hall – a thriving venue in the 1960s to 80s – it had become under-used and was often shut during the day.

But CVS has built new relationships with existing users, schools, colleges, voluntary organisations, promoters, artists, businesses and entertainers.

Events such as the Live at the Civic comedy nights have been popular bringing hundreds of people back through the doors of the Bank Street venue to see such major TV comedy stars as Ross Noble and Seann Walsh perform.

Now Dudley Council chiefs have recommended the hall and its land is transferred to the CVS in a 'community asset transfer'.

Costs

This will see the CVS manage the hall day-to-day and means the authority will no longer have to fork out the £100,000 a year costs to run the venue.

James Challis, from the CVS and civic hall general manager, said: "From a CVS point of view it was very important we did our utmost to keep the venue open."

"We had heard rumblings that there was potential for the site to close and that would have been such a shame for the local area."

Councillor Ian Kettle, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "The transfer will ensure this valued community asset remains an important venue used by the Brierley Hill and wider community. Brierley Hill Civic Hall currently costs the council in excess of £100,000 a year to run. As a charitable organisation, Dudley CVS is eligible for funding streams to which the council does not have access."

Worker survives under tons of food



Rescuers spent four hours attempting to reach the trapped worker. Picture: @TechRescueWMFS

EMERGENCY crews have been praised for their swift actions by a firm in Cradley after an employee driving a forklift truck became trapped under a pile of refrigerated goods in a warehouse.

A four hour rescue operation was held to free the 54-year-old man at Central Supplies in Saltbrook Road. He and the forklift

had been completely buried in an avalanche of stored goods.

A spokesman for the firm said: "The company can confirm there has been an accident. It is under investigation at the moment and it is too early to comment. We are very grateful for the swift reactions of the fire and ambulance services and his work colleagues.

"We are also pleased to hear that the individual involved has been released from hospital."

Fire crews from Haden Cross and Stourbridge together with the West Midlands Fire Service Technical Rescue team led the delicate operation, which saw rescuers moving items so a shift of goods did not crush the trapped man.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Popular pub hosts lights switch-on

A PUB famous for its festive display of lights will hold its annual switch-on event at the weekend.

The Summerhouse in Gospel End, Sedgley, will be turning on the lights on Sunday. The special festive event will start at 5pm, with the switch-on taking place at around 6.30pm.

There are be stall holders in attendance and a team of fancy dress entertainers to keep the crowd amused.

Donations raised by the event will go towards the Heart Link charity, which is based in Leicester.

The pub was due to hold its bonfire night party last night (Wednesday).

Concert to mark war anniversary

A MEMORIAL concert to mark 100 years since the end of the First World War is to be held in Dudley next year.

Dudley Town Hall has joined forces with Gig Caritas for a 1918 Memorial Concert, to be held at the venue on March 24. It will involve the 70-strong Restoration Chorus and 50 players from Stourbridge Chamber Orchestra as well as readings from Third From The Right Productions, plus guest soprano soloist Louise Maguire. Musical director will be Stourbridge's Keith Horsfall. See www.boroughhalls.co.uk for details.

Crafty Christmas presents at fair

VISITORS will have the opportunity to pick up a unique festive present in an event in Wordsley.

The Learning4Life group will be holding a two-day Christmas crafts fair in Wordsley next weekend.

Students from various classes at The Wordsley School, in Brierley Hill Road, will be showcasing their skills – from painting to patchwork – at the event on Saturday and Sunday, November 18 and 19.

They will be joined by other craft-people selling handmade gifts from 10am to 3pm.

Fizzogs are fired up to hot foot it for charity

COMEDY troupe The Fizzogs will brave hot coals as they tackle a fire-walk for charity.

The Dudley group, best known for their act the Dancing Grannies, will dash across burning lumps of coal tomorrow (Friday). They are set to raise cash for Wolverhampton's The Haven.

They and other participants are taking part in the fundraiser at Wombourne's The Round Oak. See haven.refuge.org.uk or call 01902 904677.

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Ex-TV favourite Kay starts appeal

A FORMER television presenter has launched a Christmas appeal for a Black Country-based charity.

Ex-BBC Midlands Today presenter Kay Alexander has kicked off Acorns Children's Hospice Christmas appeal.

It aims to raise £70,000 towards the nearly £10 million the charity needs to raise each year to continue providing its vital services across the region. Kay, who recently became Acorns President, said: "Acorns is an extraordinary charity and one which is very close to my heart."

Kay launched the charity's very first fundraising appeal more than 30 years ago.

Councillor has quit post over remarks

A SENIOR Sandwell Council cabinet member has stepped down from his post amid a probe into alleged lewd remarks about two female councillors.

Sandwell Council's leisure boss Richard Marshall is alleged to have made sexually derogatory comments about councillors Maria Crompton and Olwen Jones on phone messaging service WhatsApp.

Council leader Steve Eling confirmed Councillor Marshall has 'voluntarily stepped aside' from his cabinet role. He remains a councillor.

Mr Marshall said about his case: "I want this to be thoroughly and independently investigated."

Microbrewery set to bring jobs

A MICROBREWERY is opening in Wolverhampton bringing four new jobs, after council bosses approved the plans. The brewery is to open along Tremont Street, off the Wednesfield Road, just outside of the city centre.

The current Soho Cash & Carry will be converted into the brewery as part of the plans. The brewery will employ three full-time staff and one part-time member of staff. It will be open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and from 8am to 12 noon on Saturdays.

A few tickets are left for talk at Motty night

JUST a few tickets remain to see legendary Football commentator John Motson talk at Banks's Stadium.

Motty, as he is fondly known, is hanging up the microphone at the end of this season after 50 years.

The 72-year-old will be the subject of an 'Evening With' show at the Banks's Stadium on November 16. Tickets cost £39.50 with meal, call 01922 651414 for tickets.

Where to drop off your contributions

ALL your donations to the Express & Star's Feed A Family This Christmas appeal will be shared out between food banks and other charitable organisations across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

We are asking for seasonal treats such as mince pies, chocolates and Christmas puddings, as well as basics including canned goods, long-life milk, fruit juice, pasta and rice.

We just ask that festive food has a

best before date of the end of January. Non-food items such as toiletries, new socks and small gifts will also be gratefully received.

The good causes we will be supporting again this year include The Well (Home of Wolverhampton Food Bank).

We are also helping the Good Shepherd Ministry, based in Wolverhampton, and the Black Country Food Bank, which has centres across

Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall. Other groups include Smethwick Food Bank, Walsall North Food Bank and Cannock and District Food Bank.

The appeal will also be supporting The Haven which provides support services to women and children who are affected by domestic violence and homelessness.

The drop-off points are: Express & Star Wolverhampton, 51-53 Queen Street, WV1 1ES; Express &

Star Cannock/Walsall office, Queen Square, Cannock WS11 1EA; Oldbury office: Black Country House, Rounds Green Road, Oldbury, B69 2DG;

Waitrose Wolverhampton, Penn Road, WV2 4NJ; The Midcounties Co-operative Food Store Codsall, 28-32 Wood Lane/Bakers Way, Codsall WV8 1DB. Donations dropped off here will go to The Well.

Further donation points may be confirmed in the coming weeks.

Give vital gift of help for struggling families



FROM single mothers knowing there is nothing in the cupboard for tea to workers who suddenly find themselves out of a job – food banks are a vital lifeline.

Many have seen the number of people turning to them for help continue to rise with unemployment, changes to benefits and low wages all playing a part.

And, at this time of year, many are also faced with the heart-breaking choice of either putting food on the table or heating their home.

We have teamed up with sister daily the Express & Star to launch the Feed A Family This Christmas appeal to support the food banks.

The appeal was a huge success last year collecting 9,000 items for food banks, the homeless and children at The Haven refuge.

From now until December 16, we are collecting contributions of non-perishable food and toiletries as well as socks and hats.

The good causes we are supporting are The Well (Home of Wolverhampton Food Bank), the Good Shepherd Ministry, based in Wolverhampton, the Black Country Food Bank, which has centres across Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall, Smethwick Food Bank, Walsall North Food Bank and Cannock and District Food Bank.

The appeal will also be supporting The Haven which supports women and children who are affected by domestic violence and homelessness.



Loading up the vans – food being transported to where it is needed

Former Emmerdale star Lisa Riley, who will be appearing in Jack and The Beanstalk at Wolverhampton Grand, is backing the campaign.

She said: "I think this is fantastic. There are so many people who need a lot. We can come together as a community and do that extra bit for people even if it's tin of beans."

All of the organisations that will benefit from Feed A Family This Christmas are helping people in need every day. The Black Country Food Bank saw a 12 per cent in-

crease in demand between August 2016 and this August.

"The roll out of Universal Credit has had an impact. People are waiting up to six weeks for their benefits and they are already in debt by the time they get that first payment," a spokeswoman said. "We've seen an increase in homelessness too."

The Well in Wolverhampton continues to provide food and toiletries to more than 7,500 people a year. While Cannock and District Food Bank has also seen an increase,

helping 3,634 people in 2016/17, up from 2,676 in 2015/16.

Walsall North Food Bank, which is based at Pelsall Methodist Church, helped more than 450 extra people in 2016/17.

Group head of weekly titles Diane Davies said: "We were overwhelmed by the amazing response we received from our communities last year. his year we have seen increasing demand on food banks."

"Please help us to make a difference to people in need."



Lisa Riley, who will be appearing in Jack and The Beanstalk at Wolverhampton Grand, is backing the campaign

'Scum of the earth' steal purse from widow

A GRIEVING widow lost more than £1,100 after a thief stole her purse and used her card to withdraw cash from her account.

Anita Parkes, from Dudley, also lost photographs of her late husband Bill, who died in August.

The grandmother believes she was targeted after using a cashpoint at Barclays in Dudley town centre and says she has been left frightened to withdraw money again.

Mrs Parkes, aged 61, who is retired, had used the Barclays branch in High Street shortly before she realised her purse, which had been in a shopping trolley, was gone. She believes someone watched her enter her PIN number before her purse was swiped.

Three separate transactions were swiftly made after the theft, with a total of £1,140 stolen from her account. She described the person who targeted her as 'scum of the earth'.

Watching

Mr Parkes said: "I went to the bank first to get a statement. They must have been watching me and got the PIN number."

"I went to Dudley Market Place and that's when I've noticed my purse has been taken. I went back to the bank to have my cards cancelled but they had already withdrawn it."

Mrs Parkes was also left devastated by the loss of photos of husband Bill, who had died of liver failure in the summer. A gold necklace given to her by her mother also went.

The former convenience store manager has since had the money refunded by Barclays. Anyone with information should call police on 101.

Ladies' gym is on award shortlist

A LADIES' fitness group has been shortlisted for a prestigious national award.

Dudley's Unique Fitness 4 Ladies Only has been shortlisted in the Customer Service Category at the National Fitness Awards

The annual event recognise excellence and achievement in gyms throughout the country. The awards are organised by Script Events in conjunction with fitness industry magazine Workout.

Unique Fitness was the national winner last year in the category Ladies Only Gym. The gym, located on Castle Hill, has proved popular and is run by Raj Kaur. Trophies will be handed out at an awards ceremony on December 1 in Leicester.

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Measures proposed at 'racetrack' danger road

AN ACCIDENT blackspot is set to get yellow lines after residents described the route as a 'racetrack'.

Staffordshire County Council chiefs say steps are being taken to see yellow lines put in place outside the Firs Care home on Wodehouse Lane, Gospel End, near Sedgley. A consultation will determine if residents object to the plans.

Councillor Victoria Wilson said: "We write to residents and local businesses to make sure they are aware."

"We have got about six to eight weeks where we will hear back from people."

"The yellow lines aren't going to stop people speeding – if you approach the bend and there are cars parked on that bend then you have to pull out to the outside of the bend."

"There are already signs there now, people are flagrantly ignoring these."

It comes after residents of Wodehouse Lane warned it would take 'several fatalities' before authorities realised how dangerous the area is.

Resident Jane Kitchen, who has lived in Gospel End for 17 years, said: "The issue is there needs to be something done to slow the speed of traffic, they see it as a racetrack."

Manager of the Firs Tree care home, Christopher Smith-Law, said: "The only thing that is outside is the slow down sign, nothing else. There have been numerous accidents."

Machetes seized after car chase

THREE machetes and class A drugs were seized from a teenager after police pursued a stolen car.

Officers on a routine patrol in Dudley last week noticed a car driving erratically on Grange Road and it failed to stop for officers.

The vehicle also flagged up on the police's automatic number plate recognition system as having recently being stolen.

Officers gave chase and, after a short pursuit, they arrested an 18-year-old man on suspicion of burglary and theft of a motor vehicle.

Following a further search, they recovered three machetes, a lock knife and class A drugs.

The teenager was taken into custody for questioning.

Songs to remember

A CHOIR will deliver a poignant performance ahead of Remembrance Sunday. The Gentleman Songsters sing at the Dudley Festival of Remembrance at Dudley Town Hall tonight (Thursday) at 7.30pm. Tickets £5.

Tributes to young father who died in fall



Chris Brookes

A FATHER has paid tribute to his son from Dudley, who died after falling from a bridge in.

Chris Brookes, aged 22, was found with head injuries in a bus lane on the Wolverhampton Ring Road during the early hours of October 29.

Police believe he fell from the footbridge, between the city's rail and bus stations, and his death is not being treated as suspicious.

Mr Brookes was a general assembler at Elta Fans in Kingswinford. He has one daughter, three-year-old Layla Jade, and his partner Sarah Jayne is expecting the couple's first child together in January.

She says the boy will be named Chris Junior.

Mr Brookes' father Philip said: "He was loved so much by his friends and family. He's left a big hole in our hearts – we are all devastated by what happened."

"We have been inundated with people wanting to pay their respects."

"A JustGiving page is live on Facebook and I would like to thank people for their donations."

Within 24 hours the page had nearly hit its £3,000 target. The aim is to 'get something made for remembrance' of Mr Brookes.

A statement on the site says: "His family and partner have been offered support by loads of people and kind words. Nothing will bring Chris back but he loved his family so much and this is a little way of us showing our support at a terrible time for all his family."

A boss at the company where Mr Brookes worked has also paid tribute to him.

Damian Buxton, Elta Fans chief executive officer, said: "We have been deeply saddened to hear about the untimely passing of Chris Brookes. He was well loved by everyone who knew him and will be sadly missed. Our thoughts are with his young family at this extremely difficult time."

Partially sighted death crash driver is jailed

A DRIVER who killed a pedestrian while either too proud or frightened to admit his sight was failing has been jailed for three years.

Peter Scriven, aged 60, was blind in one eye and had reduced sight in the other.

He did not see Arthur Fletcher crossing the road in the dark with heavy rain falling, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The recently retired 65-year-old was near the centre of Priory Road, in Dudley, when hit by the Nissan and thrown into the opposite carriageway where he was struck by another vehicle, said Mr Thomas Schofield, prosecuting.

The defendant, who had kept his sight difficulties secret from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) for years, did not know what he had hit and failed to stop.

He returned to the scene to talk to police once he realised the extent of damage to his car, which had been travelling at between 20 and 24 mph when the accident happened on December 10.

Tests had shown that Scriven could not read the registration number of a vehicle when more than three metres away. The minimum requirement for a motorist is 20 metres.

Scriven was diagnosed as blind in the left eye in 2002 and the sight of the right was deteriorating but this was not disclosed to the DVLA.

Mr Alexander Stein, defending, admitted it was 'almost madness' that the partially-sighted driver had reapplied for his licence after it had been revoked following the fatality.

Mr Stein continued: "He had not seen an optician because he was terrified of being told he was going completely blind." When he finally went recently he heard the sight of his right eye could be restored by cataract surgery.

Scriven, of Forrest Road, Dudley, pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving, was jailed and given a three-and-a-half-year driving ban.

Landlord moves on after 28 years



Camra branch chairman Ryan Hunt and Tim Batham thank Mel Wood, centre, for his work at The Vine

THE landlord of a popular Black Country pub has been presented with an award by real ale fans.

Melvyn 'Mel' Wood has left the Vine, otherwise known as the Bull and Bladder, in Delph Road, Brierley Hill, after more than 25 years.

Members of the Dudley and

South Staffordshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale visited the pub to present a framed certificate to mark his 28 years at the Batham's Brewery tap.

"We said a massive and heartfelt thank you to Mel," said branch chairman Ryan Hunt, who made the presentation. "Under his supervision, the Batham's Brewery tap has enjoyed uninterrupted Good Beer Guide status and has twice been crowned the Dudley and South Staffordshire Camra pub of the year in 1996 and 2016."

Tom Comyns is moving from Dudley's Lamp Tavern to take over the iconic pub.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police alert over dangerous drugs

A DANGEROUS batch of heroin is doing the rounds in the West Midlands, police have warned.

Staffordshire Police has issued an alert saying the a potent or contaminated supply of the class A drug had been circulating in the Hednesford area.

A force spokesman said the message was issued as a warning and no arrests had been made while there had been no reported incidents.

Staffordshire Police Tweeted: "WARNING – We have been made aware that a potentially potent/contaminated batch of heroin is in circulation in the Hednesford area."

Apartments plan for site of pub

AN APARTMENT block could be built on the site of a former pub in Stourbridge town centre.

The three-storey block would be created on the site of the old Page Arms, which has stood empty on the corner of Market Street and Drury Lane for around a decade. The building has become derelict and it is hoped the development could boost the town centre.

Designs submitted along with the plans by Heyford Homes show a modern block featuring white cladding. The plans will now be assessed by Dudley Council.

Rail shares reach target of £2.5m

A YEAR-LONG Severn Valley Railway (SVR) fundraising campaign has topped its £2.5 million target – with only minutes to the deadline.

Supporters queued at the railway's head office in Kidderminster to purchase last minute shares before the 12-month share campaign finally closed.

The project will see visitor facilities at Bridgnorth transformed as part of the biggest redevelopment project in the SVR's history.

SVR chiefs said they have been 'overwhelmed' by public support.

The theme is hope at park community event

THE Hope Not Hate charity is organising a Christmas Get Together event in a Dudley park.

The charitable trust, which aims to combat extremism by strengthening community cohesion, is holding the event in Grange Park on December 3, and it will run from 11am to 3pm.

There will be live music, craft activities and games for children. Local traders and charities will also be running stalls.

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Price rise that leaves consumer smarting

MY bill from British Gas has just landed on the doormat, covering the period when the company we all love to hate imposed its extortionate 15 per cent price rise.

Interestingly, while the latest reading was taken from the "smart meter", which gives exact readings by remote control, the company still found it necessary to estimate how much gas and electricity I had used before September 1, when the new charges came into force. Now if these meters are so smart, why couldn't they have provided an accurate reading for the amount of energy used before the rise?

I have no idea how accurate the estimate was – like a lot of you, I don't have the time to sit there staring at the little black box to keep tabs on how much power the washing machine consumes on its fast spin cycle. But I would be very surprised if the estimate did not work in British Gas's favour. It's funny how these new smart meters tend to be at their smartest when it benefits the energy company.

THE late 1980s were about as good as life in this country got. Sharp suits, fast cars and decent television programmes, a time when we had everything we needed – when a giant mobile phone was a harmless gimmick rather than something which turned youngsters into zombies.

But for all the great things came out of that decade, I would suggest Hofmeister lager was not one of them. The flavourless fizzy goo is best remembered for its adverts starring George the Bear, a leering cockney in a shell suit and pork-pie hat. Incredibly, it is making a comeback. It was even voted the "best lager" in blind taste tests. Which is a bit like saying Ed-die the Eagle was our best ski jumper.

IT SEEMS we have been hit by a bit of a crime wave, with offences in the West Midlands force area up by 14 per cent.

Maybe it is to be expected, given we are now urged to report every bit of bad manners as a "hate crime".

What is revealing, though, is another set of figures showing areas of the West Midlands with the highest crime levels. As you would expect, central Birmingham tops the list with 1,030 crimes in June, but it is the next bit that gets interesting. In second place is Dudley town centre, with 752 crimes – three quarters that of Birmingham – and in fifth place is Stourbridge, with 416 crimes. These two towns have both seen their police stations closed to the public. A coincidence, I'm sure.

Brown revelations, and redhead Anne sparks anger



Sinking feeling – David Attenborough. Too much slow-mo and mood music on his show



Not seeing sense – Gordon Brown. He has revealed he feared losing his eyesight as PM



Seeing red – Anne Robinson, causing untold outrage in the shape of, how many tweets?

Fine Dave, but forget the rhapsody in Blue

THANKS for your messages about misused commas. I loved the police drink-drive campaign one Christmas with posters reading: "Don't drink, take drugs and drive."

THESE days, criticising David Attenborough is the closest thing we have to heresy. But at risk of the rack and dismemberment, I think Blue Planet II (BBC1) overdoes the music and the slow-motion.

I WAS surprised to learn this week that mental-health professionals in London estimate more than 11,000 people could experience "difficulties of some description" as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire. Do we give thanks that modern psychology can detect traumatic stress in so many individuals? Or do we simply wonder what's going on? I am reminded of an interview I did with a lady recalling her experience of the 1941 Blitz in Swansea, when she was nine. Her street took a direct hit. She and her family were buried in their cellar for hours. She emerged to learn that her best friend, also nine, had been killed in the house opposite. The next day she reported for school and her teacher asked why she was wearing pilmolls. The little girl explained that her school shoes were buried in the rubble of her house. Kindly but firmly, the teacher said she should go back and look for her shoes, "because we don't want Mr Hitler to think he's winning." That was then and Grenfell Tower is now, and I wonder what the Blitz generation would make of it all.

"I CANNOT work with you a moment longer." With those words, bus operator Sydney Hardy closed his company in Somerset, leaving 27 staff jobless. We can only guess at the stress that led to such a decision, but never underesti-

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



mate the difficulties of employing other people. I have a friend who runs a small company. I once asked him what it's like having 40 employees. "Like having 40 children," he replied.

NEW guidelines from the Good Housekeeping Institute say ice cream kept in the freezer for more than three months can lose its taste. Now, what taste would that be? Ice cream used to be tasty in about 1957 but the modern stuff is taste-free which probably explains why they've starting lacing the caramel varieties with that cheap, all-purpose flavour enhancer, salt.

IN his memoirs out next week, former prime minister Gordon Brown speaks frankly about his failing sight. Pity he wasn't so frank when he was in power. I recall showing him a newspaper with headlines about the state of the economy. He brushed the paper away with one hand. With hindsight, I realise Brown was hiding the fact that he couldn't read it. At the time, it seemed a rude gesture from a very odd bloke.

I AM amazed that any politician can defend fixed-odds gambling machines, the devices that can bankrupt a punter in a matter of hours. These infernal machines are Robin Hood in reverse, robbing the poor to make the rich very rich indeed. One spokesman for the industry this week declared that if the maximum odds were greatly reduced, it would mean the closure of thousands of betting shops. And good riddance, too.

BARRY Sheerman MP has been accused of snobbery for suggesting "better-educated people" voted to remain in the EU. But he is undeniably right. Brexit was never an intellectual exercise. It was a genuine working-class movement, the same sort of grass-roots uprising that gave us the welfare state and the NHS. And who is to say that the workers got it wrong and academia got it right?

YOU could just as well argue that those exposed to Britain's lefty-liberal education system for longest were thoroughly indoctrinated in an ivory-tower view of the EU, while people living and working in the real world saw it for what it was. A modern-languages professor in London won't hold the same opinion as a self-employed electrician in Wisbech. The first rejoices in Europe's rich culture. The second sees his jobs being taken by Polish workers. In last year's referendum we did not vote on the basis of our exam results or IQ. We each took our own life experiences to the ballot box, and a majority wanted to be out rather than in.

MEANWHILE, here's a lesson in how to create lots of offence from virtually nothing. From the Daily Telegraph website: "Anne Robinson has caused widespread outrage after saying women nowadays are 'fragile' and unable to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace." So what is the evidence for this "widespread outrage"? A million women marching on Robinson's office, perhaps? An internet poll signed by tens of thousands of the outraged? Not exactly. The Telegraph's "widespread outrage" was four tweets from Radio 4 listeners.

TALKING POINT

Just the ticket to drive me off road

The last time I did it, R Kelly was number one in the charts with Ignition, while at the cinema the film "Finding Nemo" had just been released in the United States.

I can't say I found it an enjoyable experience but at the time, it was a case of needs must.

These days, to me, driving is definitely something other people do, which is just as well as after all this time it would be unreasonable to assume that the finer points of the rules of the road have stayed the same.

I was reminded how rapidly such a mundane activity can change by a press release listing 10 rules drivers might have forgotten or did not know.

Many motorists might know they are not legally allowed to flash their lights to give way to others, but how many would be able to say that letting pets out of the car if it has broken down on the hard shoulder is a no-no according to the Highway Code?

Similarly, it's widely known that splashing a pedestrian is an offence, but how about this: paying with a phone at a drive-through takeaway is against the law unless the engine is switched off and handbrake applied.

Talking of pedestrians, pavements these days are turning into an area that could benefit from an on-foot equivalent of the Highway Code. Cyclists, mobility scooters, pushchairs, skateboarders, delivery vans... all are jostling for space on pavements and in pedestrianised areas where space is limited by A-boards, lamp posts, benches, and planters etc.

It's a wonder pedestrians can even get to where they want to, without an unpleasant confrontation or serious injury, but even they can cause problems.

Consider the 'shall we dance?' ritual as people walking towards each other step to the same side to let the other one pass. How about a 'keep left' rule seeing as that's the side we drive on in Britain?

And what about the formation walking teams who stroll along three or even four abreast, forcing those behind them to attract their attention so they can pass without stepping into the road? Let's see a 'leave enough space for overtaking' rule to deal with that one. And when leaving a shop, try looking both ways to avoid collisions with other pavement users.

It's enough to make you want to get behind the wheel again. On second thoughts though, is it worth having to look out for those pesky pedestrians day in day out? Whether on foot or driving, let's be more considerate to each other, shall we? Until then, everyone get out of the way, I've got a bus to catch!

STEVE PARLETT

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Blame game of belligerent Brexiteers

WHEN I voted to stay in the EU, I was voting for economic stability, security, international friendship, and the long-term preservation of peace.

And what have Mr Farrage's divisive machinations brought us? Instability, insecurity, stress, tensions, and a slow-growing animosity between sections of the community within the United Kingdom and across Europe.

I am tired of hearing the hard-line Brexiteers incessantly repeating like demented parrots 'The referendum reflected the clear will of the British people' when in fact only two thirds of the

population of the country voted and even then it was almost a 50-50 split – hardly an overwhelming majority.

I think more accurately that it represented the people's confusion; bamboozled by the Remainers with their over-complicated arguments and duped by the Leavers with their one-issue immigration smokescreen and their hollow, meaningless Trump-like 'give-us-our-country-back' slogans.

Now that more and more facts and undesirable consequences are surfacing, the Brexiteers are becoming more extreme and belligerent, blaming each

other and everybody else for the escalating chaos.

Leaving the EU and following Boris Johnson's stated aim of a 'deregulated society' will open the doors to more zero-hours contracts, unrestricted rent rises, more job insecurity, erosion of workers' rights and more money in fewer pockets.

Only the Liberal Democrats have had the courage to stand up and say 'If we get power we shall stay in the European Union'.

ROBERT PERRY RBBSA
Stourbridge

Bugged by ecological concerns

ACCORDING to a report, there has been at least a 75 per cent drop in insect pollination over the last 30 years.

I am in my late 60s and remember seeing insect splattered windcreens following long car journeys. On late summer nights if windows were left open, lots of moths would fly in seeking the light. This has not been the case for many years.

Insects are crucial as a food source for many species whose numbers have dwindled as a consequence. Extremely important too is their role in pollination of fruit trees and many other food crops.

Surely one of the main causes of this decline must be insecticides. There is still a big debate on the use of the more recent development of neonicotinoids, are they affecting honey bees?

It makes you wonder why nobody really thought about the consequences.

AVRIL FERRIER
Stourbridge

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Warning after an attack by vicious dog

MAY I thank the kind lady who came to my rescue when my dog was viciously attacked by another dog as I was walking along the Stourbridge Road in Halesowen, near Short Cross petrol station, on October 30.

My dog was badly bitten and would have been more severely wounded without her timely intervention as the young girl who was with the dog was worse than useless. The dog (a brindle Staffie type) was wearing a totally inadequate collar which snapped open under strain. In over 40 years owning and walking dogs I have never seen so vicious an attack. I would also ask this lady, who evidently knew the girl, to contact the owner. I do not know this dog's history but it should not be allowed out in public without a muzzle. I would like to warn other dog walkers to be aware.

JILL BODDY
Halesowen

Rainbows praise train courtesy

CAN I please thank everyone who on Wednesday, October 18, gave up their seats to a group of Rainbows on the 17.45 (in reality 18.15), train from Cradley Heath to Stourbridge.

We had been on a trip but hadn't taken into account that autumn phenomenon, leaves on the track, so had had to wait half an hour at Cradley to get on a very packed train with 15 five to six-years-olds.

People were so lovely and proved there are far more good people about than are given credit for. Every girl was given a seat so they could all stay together and be by their leaders by people who'd been at work all day, had waited possibly longer than 30 minutes and wanted to get home. The same help applied on the Shuttle.

Many thanks everyone, you were a great example to the girls.

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Civil war breaks out at meeting

Amblecote History

CHAIRMAN Geoff Longmore welcomed visitors and members to a talk on the civil war and its local connections by retired local history teacher Max Keen.

Max entered the theatre in a civil war soldier's costume. The audience was asked to guess which side he was on, explaining that both sides were virtually the same except the officers who wore a red or orange sash to distinguish whether they were Royalist led by King Charles I or Parliamentarian led by Oliver Cromwell.

Max illustrated and described local places connected with the war, such as the visit to Stourbridge by Prince Rupert who stayed at The Talbot. Other local places involved were Wollescote Hall, Enville and Stourton Castle. Max showed his disgustment of no commemorative Heritage Blue Plaques in these prominent places.

After the battle of Worcester in 1651 King Charles II fled via Stourbridge and Wordsley on his way to Boscobel. They were approached by a group of Parliamentarians, so Charles and his group dismounted and walked through Stourbridge, speaking French.

At the time the town was full of French speaking Huguenot glassmakers and the Royal group blended in to aid their escape.

His talk was accompanied by slides and references to actions taken by the King and Roundheads around the district.

Banding together to support Alzheimer's



Margaret Morgan and Maureen Hall with guild chairman Gaynor Ormerod
The Sedgley Morning TG

THE Sedgley Morning Guild is supporting Alzheimer's Society as its charity of the year, and members have been busily knitting sensory bands.

The bands are sleeves that have attachments added to them, and they are used to calm patients with dementia or Alzheimer's

by giving them something to do with their hands. The bands will be part of a presentation to the Society at a Guild meeting in February.

Illustrated talk on secret garden

DEREK Higgott from Staffordshire gave an illustrated talk entitled 'The Secret Garden'. Derek is a gardener with the National Trust at Shugborough Hall having previously for 25 years been a greenkeeper at Ingestre Golf Club.

It transpired the secret garden is his own rural garden in Great Haywood near

Clent Gardening Club

Rugeley. Derek explained the name came from the description by a visitor who could not find it on one of Derek's open garden days.

Members were enthralled by his entertaining approach laced with a wide variety of splendid photo-

graphs which he had taken showing his garden in all its glories. The garden occupies a three-quarters of an acre plot but is crammed full of a huge and varied number of plants catering for all seasons.

Treasurer Peter Orme proposed a vote of thanks for a an excellent talk and most entertaining evening.



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Teenage soldier honoured 61 years after his death

A TEENAGE soldier who died more than six decades ago is to finally be recognised for his service and sacrifice.

Joseph Anthony Hawker, of Brierley Hill, was one of almost 400 British servicemen who died fighting insurgents in Cyprus in 1956.

Conscripted, Private Hawker was one of a group of soldiers hurriedly sent to the then-British colony to help the island's police deal with the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters. But during an operation to capture the group's leader Georgios Grivas, Private Hawker died in a fire caused by a mortar bomb.

The 19-year-old's death was discovered by his family living in Brierley Hill in a newspaper report.

Now Keith Hawker, the one surviving sibling of Private Hawker's seven brothers and sisters, will receive The Elizabeth Cross on his behalf. It was being presented by John Crabtree OBE, The Lord Lieutenant of the West Midlands, in Dudley.

Emotional

Mr Hawker, aged 76, said: "It will be a very emotional day for me.

"It will bring some closure to his death, it is just so sad I'm the only one left in the family to finally see it. It is a big shame this did not come many years ago."

Joseph Hawker was born in Lower Valley Road in Brierley Hill and attended Hawbush School. He left aged 15 and went to work for Stuart Glassworks in Brierley Hill. But he was called up to national service in 1956, joining hundreds of servicemen to serve in the four-year Cyprus Emergency. As part of the 3rd Battalion Parachute Regiment, his job was to assist police against the National Or-



Keith Hawker will receive the Elizabeth Cross on behalf of his brother



Private Joseph Hawker, 19, pictured shortly before his death in Cyprus

ganisation of Cypriot Fighters. But in an operation named Lucy Alphonse, when British troops had the group and its leader pinned down in woodland, Private Hawker died in a fierce fire started by an explosion. He had only been called up four months before.

He was buried at Wayne's Keep, the British Military Cemetery on the island.

His brother said: "I was 14 at the time and I heard about his death while coming back from Brierley Hill on the bus. We saw my sister and she said in the newspaper they were reporting that he was one of 19 soldiers who had died. We were devastated. Only weeks

before he had written a letter saying he was enjoying serving on the island."

He added: "At the time the neighbours in the street raised money to bring his body home. But the Red Cross would not allow it, so the money was used instead to purchase an organ in his name for the church in Hawbush Road." The organ was later removed.

Private Hawker had seven siblings - Derrick, Keith, Gordon, Christine, Cynthia, Stephanie and Janet.

The Elizabeth Cross is given to the next of kin of members of the British Armed Forces killed in action or as a result of a terrorist attack.

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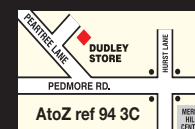
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Puppy Milo likes to climb in his toy box



Bob pops in to see the goldfish



Cinnamon and Nutmeg are best friends



Penny and Bella having a cuddle



Charlie out in the back garden



Archie enjoys a run on the beach

Countdown now on for the final judging

WELL this is the last week we will be carrying pictures of all your adorable pets – for now.

But do not despair. If your pet has not featured on our weekly competition page that does not mean that it will not be included in the shortlist for the final judging.

Keep an eye out for the shortlist of 10 which will be appearing in our editions of Thursday, November 30 and Thursday, December 7.



Then it will be up to you readers to let us know what you think. We are looking for the most interesting picture.

When we print the shortlist we will

include details of how to vote so keep your eye out.

As well as the £100 prize the winner will feature on the front page of our Christmas week editions.

Over the weeks we have had hundreds of entries of all sorts of different pets. Some out walking, some playing, lots eating and enjoying a snooze, but one thing has become very clear – just how much these pets are loved. Thanks for all your entries.

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Talk on future of beacon beauty spot

TONIGHT (Thursday) the past, present and future of a beauty spot between Wolverhampton and Dudley will be the subject of a talk.

Conservation manager of Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, Simon Atkinson, will speak about Sedgley Beacon and its historic features, including the Victorian tower, at St Andrew's Church in Bilston Street, Sedgley, at 7.30pm.

From a vantage point on the beacon it is possible to get a view across the Black Country, Wolverhampton into Staffordshire and, on a clear day, as far away as Wales.

Heritage

Mr Atkinson will be telling Sedgley Local History Society about the wildlife trust's bid to turn Sedgley Beacon into a major green attraction. They are jointly applying with Dudley Council to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support plans for enhancing and protecting the site.

The talk is free for members of the society (£5 annual membership) and costs £1 for visitors.

Work for the new Metro line is on track



Work taking place to clear the route for the Metro trams

WORK to clear a disused railway track ahead of the opening of a new Midland Metro line extension to Dudley is continuing.

This picture shows contractors for the Midland Metro Alliance working on a stretch of the former South Staffordshire railway line near Dudley Port railway station.

They are clearing vegetation from the track, last used by passengers in 1965 and officially closed in 1993. The track will form part of the Midland Metro Line from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.

A Midland Metro Alliance spokesman said: "Preliminary works are currently taking place, which involve Network Rail being on site to remove the existing rails. This is required as the tramway will operate using different track than the previous heavy rail line."

The £200m line will feature 17 stops between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill town centre, including The Black Country Living Museum, Dudley Zoo and Castle.

The seven-mile route is expected to open to passengers in 2023, with trams operating up to ever six minutes during busy periods.

Veteran fly the flag councillor dies at 80

A VETERAN councillor who represented a South Staffordshire village for more than 40 years has died, aged 80.

Councillor Bryn Whitehouse joined Essington Parish Council in 1973 and served on the district council. Paying tribute, Councillor David Clift said: "He was one of our community's great characters."

Councillor Whitehouse, a great-grandfather, flew the flag of St George from a 25ft pole on his front drive every day for almost half a century. He made one exception for the American flag on the election of President Barack Obama with the flag coming from Essington, Pennsylvania.

There will be no let up in fines, says council boss

A COUNCIL boss in Dudley has insisted there will be no let up in parking fines after nearly 4,000 were issued across the borough in three months.

A total of 3,796 parking charge notices were handed out in Dudley between July and September, putting

£82,225 into the council coffers. More were issued for parking violations in Dudley town centre's Castle Street than anywhere else in the borough.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, environment boss at Dudley Council, said: "Parking restrictions are in place across the borough and serve an important purpose in ensuring our roads are as safe and free flowing as they can be."

"If drivers ignore these restrictions or park illegally they must expect to receive a fine."

"Illegal parking is a persistent problem across the borough and something that residents bring to their local councillors on a daily basis."

"Money generated from parking fines is ring-fenced to go back into the upkeep of the roads and improving road safety."

Church buildings officer appointed

A NEW church buildings officer has been appointed to support religious leaders who are planning changes at their places of worship.

Mark Carter has been brought in by the Diocese of Worcester and will work with officials across Dudley and Worcester when they want to make changes to church buildings and churchyards. He previously worked as the operations manager at Hereford Cathedral.

Mr Carter said: "I am used to the processes involved in seeking approval for works on ecclesiastical buildings. I am looking forward to moving from a single site to working throughout the diocese and gaining a better understanding of the range of ways in which parish churches are used."

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Glasses lost on buses help people in Africa

THEY make up just a fraction of the thousands of items left every year on buses across the West Midlands. However, the glasses and sunglasses currently in the lost property department of National Express West Midlands are being put to good use.

Glasses left behind by passengers are always handed into lost property teams in the hope that they can be reunited with their owners. But if they remain unclaimed are donated to an international charity.

Linda Brian is based at the bus operator's Birmingham Central garage and it is part of her job to regularly collect the unclaimed glasses from across the company's garages in the Black Country and Birmingham.

She hands them over to Lions Club International, which sort and clean the spectacles, which are assessed and shipped out to Lions Club colleagues across Africa. They then match the prescription glasses to local people suffering from a variety of sight issues. The glasses are given

to those in need completely free of charge.

Brigitte Green, Birmingham office branch manager for Lions Club International, said the glasses were invaluable for the charity's work in Africa. She said anyone who has lost glasses on buses throughout the West Midlands could at least be consoled with the thought that they were being put to good use in a different part of the world.

She said: "We simply cannot get hold of enough of these glasses and National Express West Midlands is our biggest supporter by far, really making a huge difference to so many people. In this, our centennial year, Lions Club International aims to donate one million pairs of glasses to Africa."

Linda Brian, at National Express West Midlands, said glasses are stored for a decent period to enable the owner to claim them. "We all know just how expensive these prescription glasses are," she added.



Linda Brian and Jack Turrell from National Express with Brigitte Green, of Lions Club International

Carillion sells £13m development assets to Richardson family

THE Black Country-based Richardson family has snapped up some of the assets of struggling construction group Carillion.

Wolverhampton-headquartered Carillion is selling off parts of its operation as it seeks to re-build its finances in the wake of a massive fall in share value after revealing a £1.15 billion half-year loss.

The group has now sold its 67 per cent shareholding in property development company Ask Real Estate and a 50 per cent stake in separate entity Ask Carillion Developments, for £13.8 million to Dukehill.

Shopping

Based in Oldbury, Dukehill has a £60.8m turnover and specialises in commercial and residential property development. It is owned by the Richardson family, headed by surviving twin Roy, who were the original developers and owners of the Merry Hill Shopping Centre.

Of the £13.8m, £1m is dependent on the sale of 100 Embankment in Salford, to be paid by Dukehill within five business days of signing the sale documentation.

Carillion has appointed a new chief executive Andrew Davies, currently chief executive of Wates Group, to lead its turn around.

Police say they need £1.3bn to fight crime

POLICE forces need an extra £1.3 billion to tackle terrorism and a surge in offences, according to crime chiefs.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APPC) said an extra £440 million would be required in 2018/19 and £845m more in the following financial year.

The extra money would pay for 5,000 more officers to deal with new types of crime, as well as an additional 1,100 armed police.

The calls have been backed by Labour West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson and his Conservative Staffordshire counterpart, Matthew Ellis. The plea comes following funding cuts since 2010.

The Government agreed to protect overall spending in the 2015 spending review but the way that money is allocated means some forces are likely to lose out.

Stretched

Paddy Tipping, the APCC's finance deputy lead, said: "The police workforce has been reduced by nearly 19 per cent over the last seven years and at a time when the population is growing and the sheer complexity of policing is increasing. It is clear more funding is required."

Mr Tipping, who is Nottinghamshire crime commissioner, added: "The police have had to respond to horrific terrorist acts and unprecedented levels of demand at our control rooms and, increasingly, we know that officers and staff, whose work we all value so greatly, have become stretched like never before. A lack of investment will lead to increases in crime."

Mr Jamieson said crime was rising.

"West Midlands Police has faced £145 million cuts since 2010," he said. "If the Government values the safety of the public they



Amber Rudd – critical

need to give forces the resources they need."

Mr Ellis wants Government to allow commissioners to increase council tax above the two per cent cap.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd has faced a backlash after telling police bosses to focus on cutting crime instead of lobbying the Government for more money.

She called on police and crime commissioners to tell residents how they will make them safer, rather than calling for extra cash.

"When crime stats go up, I don't just want to see you reaching for a pen to write a press release asking for more money from the Government," she said.

Her comments were criticised by Commissioner Jamieson. He said: "Amber Rudd's outburst is truly incredible. The Home Secretary is ignoring the evidence from Chief Constables working on the frontline to protect people. We are doing all we can to keep our streets safe, but it is much harder with dwindling budgets and fewer officers."

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14 Rehab rather than jail for drug abuser

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, November 9, 2017

A 25-year-old whose life has been blighted by drug taking has been spared jail to help him beat the habit.

Kirt Nash has developed mental health issues as a result of drug abuse and had left him homeless, a judge heard.

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that Nash was sitting on the kerb in Gibbons Lane, Kingswinford, when a young woman walked by on April 6. He suddenly ran towards her clutching a sharpened sliver of plastic and told the horrified victim he was going to stab her. Fortunately she managed to flee from him without injury, said Mr Ekwall Tiwana, prosecuting. Nash was arrested the following day after being caught stealing a sandwich from a branch of Greggs. He still had the sharp piece of plastic on his person.

Mr Simon Williams, defending, explained: "He has got mental health issues as a result of his use of illicit substances but does not seem mature enough to approach the appropriate authorities for assistance."

Nash had denied threatening a person with a blade but was convicted after a trial. Recorder Kevin Hegarty QC told him: "You need support to help you." Nash was given a 12 month community order with rehabilitation. Time in jail on remand meant he had already served the equivalent of 12 months behind bars.

Diwali dance show is a celebration of light

JAIVANT Patel Dance bring a celebration of the festival of Diwali in dance to Wolverhampton University's city centre Arena Theatre on Saturday night. Diwali Utsav: Sitaron Ke Sang celebrates the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil. Tickets cost £12 (£10 concessions) for the 7.30pm show. See wlv.ac.uk/arena-theatre

School backed by protection consultant over toilet CCTV

Fantasy cakes are out of this world



Rose Macefield, of Rose Marie's Cakes and Sugarcraft in Coseley with her cakes, including Dobby from Harry Potter and ET

FROM ET to Guardians Of The Galaxy - incredible cakes made in the Black Country were on show when Cake International was held at the NEC, Birmingham, at the weekend.

Amelia Mason, owner of Shuga Budz in Tettenhall, displayed a four-tier Batman theme cake in the celebration cake category.

Also taking cakes to the event was Rose Macefield, who runs cake deco-

rating shop Rose Marie's Cakes and Sugarcraft in Coseley.

She was also holding an author's stand for her book Sensational Sculpted Cakes.

Dobby

But that has not stopped her bringing her latest creations Dobby the House Elf and Fawkes the Phoenix from Harry Potter, a Niffler from Fan-

tastic Beasts and Groot from Guardians of the Galaxy.

Since decorating her first cake in 2007, Rose has gone on to win Overall Best in Show at Cake International in 2013 and at Cake Masters in 2014.

Mrs Macefield, aged 43, said: "I'm bringing along cakes to show students what they can achieve."

"I meet a lot of beginners who think they cannot do that, but they can."

INSTALLING cameras in a Dudley school's toilets was 'an extreme measure' but one that will help tackle bullying, according to a child protection expert.

The move by Summerhill School in Kingswinford to install CCTV in the toilets has proved divisive with some parents criticising the school. Headteacher James Bowkett said the cameras had been installed following 'disappointing behaviour', and 'were not pointed in sensitive areas'.

Now independent child protection consultant Joanna Nicolas has come out in defence of the CCTV move. She said it was a sad indictment of some pupils' behaviour but if the school felt the measures were needed then the decision should be backed.

Ms Nicolas said: "I think it's a sad day in a way but the school has clearly got a good reason for doing it."

Difficult

"We can get hysterical about this and think children are going to be filmed but that isn't going to happen. What we know is that children are bullied and abused in private places."

"We don't want cameras pointing at toilets but if we have to go to these extreme measures to protect children then that is what we have to do. It's a sad day when a school has to do this but unfortunately they are dealing with more and more difficult behaviour."

Sixty-six per cent of 1,000 voters who took part in a poll by The Chronicle's sister newspaper the Express & Star poll said installing the cameras in toilets was the wrong move.


Mr Bowkett added: "I must stress this is to allow us to monitor who is entering and leaving the communal areas and I can reassure parents no cameras are directed towards sensitive areas including cubicles or urinals."

It's a Cannon ball to help cancer charity

SHOWBIZ and sports stars will help celebrate a Black Country charity's six-year mission to support families battling cancer.

Celebrities will visit to Wolverhampton for Balls To Cancer's glittering Christmas gala event, paying tribute to the Coseley-based charity's fight to raise awareness of male cancer. Sue Bates, who co-founded the charity with husband Mark, said: "It's all about having a good time and celebrating our year."

The event at Ramada Park Hall Hotel will include a Christmas dinner on November 17, with guests including comedians Tommy Cannon and Paul Chuckle, former Wolves striker Mel Eves, Sandra Martins of TV's Gogglebox, Jamie Reed and Jade Lewis, from The Only Way is Essex, and former Wolves star Jamie O'Hara. For information or to buy tickets, £40, visit ballstocancer.co.uk



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It's not forbidden to enjoy sci-fi spectacle



The cast of Return to the Forbidden Planet staged at Sedgley by Trinity Musical Theatre Company

Return to the Forbidden Planet.

The Mill Theatre, Sedgley
TO celebrate their 80th anniversary in 2016, local amateur group Trinity Operatic Society was reborn as Trinity Musical Theatre Company, kicking off their new regime with a confident production of The Witches of Eastwick thus leaving their years of Gilbert and Sullivan behind.

For their second production, the company chose Bob Carlton's Shakespearean sci-fi spectacle, Return to the Forbidden Planet, the script of which is loosely based on The Tempest, wound together with hits of the sixties and a cast of crazy characters aboard a spaceship. Sounds like complete madness? Well it is, but then that is the

point of the show. I have to confess that this is not one of my favourites and having seen a variety of versions, both professional and amateurs.

Each time I see Forbidden Planet, I hope to be won over but so far, no luck. However, Trinity's production came close.

Amid the mayhem, what really shone through were the excellent performances from the principals. Mitchell Bastable takes the helm as Captain Tempest, with a Superhero portrayal of the suave spaceman, belting out hits including Young Girl, Good Vibrations and Great Balls of Fire.

Beth Berwick-Lowe is a shining star in the galaxy, wowing the crowd, as well as the Captain, as Miranda, with

her exceptionally strong vocal performance, while Pat Lewis as Prospero is suitably wacky and wide-eyed.

A big well done to Steve Taylor for staying on his feet as Aerial the roller-skating robot and for delivering a heart-felt portrayal of this lovable character.

The strong ensemble and troupe of young enthusiastic dancers fill the stage and indeed the auditorium at times, with modest but effective choreography by local dance teacher, Lindsey Grant, while Dan Tomkinson and his band completely stole the show with their musical prowess.

Director Andy Poulton should be proud of his cast.

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No sentence will bring Ben back, says mother

"I cannot believe that through some senseless act I have lost my child."

Those are the heart-wrenching words of a Halesowen mother after her son's murderer was sentenced to life behind bars.

Benjamin Morse, of Yewtree Road, described as cheeky and fun-loving, had enjoyed a bank holiday Sunday with his friends drinking in Birmingham and his hometown of Halesowen.

His life was cut short when 21-year-old Nidal Alboraiqi drove into him from behind, catapulting him onto the windscreen of the Vauxhall Corsa. The 36-year-old Arsenal fan suffered a catastrophic brain injury which he could not survive.

Alboraiqi, of Foxhunt Road, Halesowen, is starting a minimum of 15 years in jail after being sentenced at Wolverhampton Crown Court following a two-week trial.

Mr Morse's mother, Gay Jones, 59, said: "As a mother you never expect to say goodbye to your child, that you would make arrangements for their funeral."

Phone

"Even now I expect Ben to walk in through the front door. I expect my phone to ring and Ben to be on the other end for a chat."

Alboraiqi's trial was unable to shed any light on what prompted him to drive at Mr Morse and his friends in Beach Street, Halesowen, in the early hours of May 1. He was also found guilty of perverting the course of justice after trying to dispose of the car. For this he was handed a two-year jail term to run concurrently.

Judge John Burridge said killer Alboraiqi had not shown 'an ounce of common decency'.



Benjamin Morse was hit from behind



Callous hit-and-run killer Nidal Alboraiqi

Carillion in £320m rail deal

TROUBLED infrastructure giant Carillion has won two contracts worth around £320 million with Network Rail to upgrade infrastructure in the Midlands.

The Wolverhampton-based company said the first will see it spruce up existing track and infrastructure on the route from London to Corby, which will generate £62m of revenue. A separate deal through Carillion

Powerlines, which is a joint venture firm, will see work undertaken to complete the electrification of the same route. This contract is expected to generate £260m of revenue over the next three years.

Carillion, which has about 43,000 staff working worldwide, has been thrown into crisis since a July trading update sent shares tumbling by more than 70 per cent in one week.

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17 Dudley Chronicle Thursday, November 9, 2017 PHILIPS PIFCO Tefal Russell Hobbs smeg Swan TOSHIBA Vax warmite

18 £1m boost for creatives in Black Country

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, November 9, 2017

AN ARTS project has been awarded funding of nearly £1 million which will allow it to operate for a further three years.

Creative Black Country seeks to make the most of talent across the region and has run projects including Desi Pubs, 100 Masters and the ongoing Funny Things comedy festival.

It was established in 2014 for an initial three-year run but has now received £999,335 from the Arts Council's Creative People and Places fund which will allow it to continue until 2020.

Parminder Dosanjh, creative director at Creative Black Country, said: "We're over the moon! Over the past few years we have been lucky enough to collaborate with some exceptional people.

"We look forward to building on the work of Desi Pubs, 100 Masters and Funny Things, and continue to share rich narratives from people and places across Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton."

Creative Black Country was one of six successful arts projects across England to receive a share of £5.5m Arts Council funding. The money is designed to ensure more people create and experience arts and culture in the places where they live. It targets 21 places across England with low cultural engagement.

Stray Birds fly in for gig at Birmingham pub

AMERICAN bluegrass trio The Stray Birds bring their rocking roots music to Birmingham on Wednesday, November 15.

They will be in concert at Kings Heath venue the Hare and Hounds.

The Stray Birds have been flying high since the 2012 release of their critically acclaimed self-titled album.

School suggesting extra layer after heating breaks

Veteran cycle champ launches race



Sponsors and cyclists join forces to launch the Round the Wrekin event 2018 with the aim of getting 1,000 signed up

A POPULAR fundraising cycle event has been launched for 2018, with sponsors and cycling stars joining forces.

The Banks's Round The Wrekin cycle sportive is to take place in May 2018 and follows hot on the heels of this year's race, which amassed more than £28,000 for Wolverhampton's Compton Hospice.

Cycling champion Hugh Porter

MBE launched the event surrounded by representatives from Marston's Brewery. One special guest was managing director of the firm, Richard Westwood, who will be cycling the full 100 miles in 2018 after completing 60 miles on a tandem with his daughter this year.

More than 740 cyclists took part in the Round The Wrekin cycle sportive 2017, up by around 140.

Organisers are hoping to welcome more than 1,000 cyclists in 2018.

Mr Porter said: "Sadly, I think many families are touched by cancer in one way or another. I myself have lost my sister and uncle to the disease. So whatever I can do to help the hospice is special to me. If we can 1,000 riders at the event, it means we can raise even more for the charity."

Visit www.roundthewrekin.co.uk

PUPILS at one of Dudley's largest secondary schools have been told to wear extra clothing after the heating broke down. Ellowes Hall Sports College in Lower Gornal has been without full heating since September.

Headteacher Alan Jasper said the main boilers have stopped working, leaving the school, which has around 1,000 pupils, without heating and hot water in some areas.

Emergency repairs will take more than three months to complete, either side of Christmas, but temporary heating and hot water would be in place during this time.

Mr Jasper said the boilers had failed due to 'age and wear and tear' and that a grant to cover the £270,000 repairs had recently been approved.

Condemned

"When school reopened in September the two main school heating boilers were condemned due to age and wear and tear. The school immediately applied for an emergency grant to cover the costs of the repairs.

"We take the education and welfare of our students very seriously and, hence, we will endeavour to keep the school open if at all possible during this time. Currently, the situation is monitored every day and at present there is no need to close the school.

"We will advise parents and carers when the temporary system is up and running, however, in the meantime, students are advised to wear an additional layer of clothing under their school uniform if required."

More than half of the school has heating and hot water in areas including the dining hall, sports hall, PE department and sixth form block.

Two authors in library talk about novels

TWO authors famed for their modern take on the romance novel will be visiting Wordsley Library this month.

Authors Christie Barlow and Bella Osborne will be at the free event on November 23. The pair will be talking all about their work as writers, taking questions and answers from the audience and selling signed copies of their books.

Christie, who lives in Staffordshire, is the author of seven novels and her latest, *The Cosy Canal Boat Dream*, was recently published by Harper Collins. Her books focus on the domestic, from playground tales to countryside living, infused with warmth and humour.

Bella, who lives in the Midlands has been jotting down stories as far back as she can remember but decided that 2013 would be the year that she finished a her first novel. To book a place contact (01384) 812765.

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ClassifiedAds

Noddy and I have had a hell of a life

You'd expect him to be the showiest of all of the members of Slade. After all, Dave Hill made a career from modelling silver wigs and platform boots. He was the brightest star in Slade's firmament, the one who'd dress most outrageously, who'd model a great scooping fringe for more years than was sensible.

Yet Dave Hill is as far removed from the caricature as is possible. Our scheduled 15-minute chat turns into 45. And the subjects aren't just Rolls Royces and drink, six number one singles and outrageous apparel – Dave talks about depression and importance of our shared history, about his deep, deep affection for the Black Country and a long-lasting marriage.

The man nicknamed Superyob who rocked the world with Slade is more sensitive and thoughtful than anyone might imagine. Yes, there's Merry Xmas Everybody and six smash LPs in his new book, *So Here It Is*, which is published this month by Unbound. But there's also talk about post-War Britain and his office job at Tarmac, about sliding into depression during his later years and suffering a stroke, there's an honest assessment of Slade's split – to paraphrase, everyone started to hate Noddy, though Dave and Nod are the best of pals again now – and there's the slow revealing of a gentle soul.

Superyob? Dave Hill. You're having a larf.

"I was born in a castle and then grew up in a council house in Wolverhampton. I had a smashing mum and dad but things were tough growing up in post-War Britain. My life really changed when I heard rock'n'roll music. I said goodbye to an office job at Tarmac and never looked back. I played in various groups before fame came knocking at my door.

"Slade's success didn't happen overnight but boy, were we big when we took off! We had 23 top twenty hits and six number one singles. Three of these went straight to the number one spot – a first, not even matched by The Beatles. Topping it all was Merry Xmas Everybody, which sold over one million copies. We also had six smash LPs, and one time had the number one and two spots on the LP chart. All this made Slade the biggest band in the UK in the 70s, and we were massive all over the world, too.

"Slade had some great years but fashions change and the break-up of the original band was heartbreaking. I thought that would be it for me.

"I battled through depression and got over a stroke, and decided to carry on



Back in the day – Slade in the early 70s



I was in a dark place – I had two years of really bad depression

doing the thing which I do best: I went back on the road with Slade. I've seen more of the world, and more fans, in the last 25 years than I did when the band were at their most famous."

Dave's autobiography, inevitably, was created in his beloved Black Country. He met a writer, from Walsall, who was a big Slade fan and encouraged him to jot down his memories. Publishers were slow on the uptake so they took it to Unbound, the pledge-funded organisation. Dave smashed his target – achieving 116 per cent funding from 564 backers.

"It was a nice process. If I'd been with a different publisher, they'd have been telling me what to write. With these guys, I was just allowed to get on with it. I worked with a ghostwriter, he was from Wednesbury. It was important to do it that way. I was working with somebody who understood the way I talk and who related to my upbringing."

Dave didn't just want to write about the good times. He wanted to tell the truth, to write down his experience of mental health issues.

"The Slade years were incredible. We had the most original Christmas song. We influenced a lot of people. Those years took me to destinations I wouldn't have

dreamed of. Everything was good until the break-up of the band.

"I didn't know what I was going to do. But I'd got a good wife and three children. I had a lot to carry on for." Dave is more candid in his book about the break-up than others have been.

"I spoke to Nod about it, he keeps in touch. He said nobody's really written how the split was. So I did my best to write about how it was. Nod and myself have one heck of a life. We have a love for each other. We didn't agree with everything but we agreed with one thing, to be in a great band. We achieved that. Slade were a great rock'n'roll band. We had uniqueness and an honesty.

"With Nod, there was the realisation that he was going to go. And back then, when I weighed it up, maybe there wasn't any love for him in the band any more. He had to do what he had to do. In the early days it was like we were glued together. But we loved it and we're mates now. We'll always be known for it, especially Nod and myself."

Dave's book is equally remarkable for his exploration of depression, which followed routine surgery.

"I was in a dark place for a while. I had two years of really bad depression and was wondering whether I would ever feel good again. It was scary, it was hard on the family. I didn't trust medication. I found the right person who helped me, a great psychiatrist, who knew about medication. She was a specialist in her area and great to talk to. She told me I was 100 per cent depressed."

The joy returned when he listed to some old 60s music in his car. "The music gave me that joy inside. I went on a shopping spree buying clothes, I was Dave Hill again, that bloke, going out and getting stuff. The dark areas faded away. But I've wrote about that in the book."

Andy Richardson

● **So Here It Is: How the Boy From Wolverhampton Rocked the World With Slade**, by Dave Hill, is published by Unbound on November 16.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

Wolverhampton's Lions of Dissent



Lions of Dissent are aiming to be complete package

Lions of Dissent self produce and create everything themselves, including the lyrics, music, studio production, video production, art design and website as well as screen printing T-shirts and curating photo shoots.

Currently with 10 members, the group which formed in 2015 features a creative director, songwriters, musicians, producers, filmmakers, web developers and graphic

designers. Speaking about the group's collective philosophy, lead songwriter Tim Baker says 'It's not only through absolute necessity, but an essential part of the ethos that we create everything ourselves - constructing and expanding our own universe piece by piece and inviting everybody to step inside as they pass us by'.

Having gained praise from the likes of Simon Raymonde (owner of Bella Union Records), Anton Newcombe (Brian Jonestown Massacre) and Simone Marie Butler (Primal Scream) the group have also

attracted international interest.

After releasing seven videos on YouTube, tracks such as X Y Z and Heaven Sent have amassed over 6000 views to build an audience and reputation.

This has allowed them to release their debut EP 'What Would It Feel Like To Be Free' this week on their own label Lion Rebel Recordings.

Now Lions of Dissent have announced their debut live show taking place in their home city at the Newhampton Arts Centre tomorrow night (Friday).

Wolf Alice is so ready to rock the Academy

The gig of the week sees Wolf Alice in concert at Birmingham's O2 Academy on Thursday, November 16.

Since their debut *My Love Is Cool* in 2015 and a storming Glastonbury set last year, this London outfit have become the UK's premier indie rock band - blending shoegaze guitar swirl with grungy hard rock. The four piece fronted by Ellie Rowsell, pictured, a month ago released

second album *Visions of a Life* and won more fans with an appearance on Jools Holland's TV show.

And it's worth turning up early to catch their tour supports Superfood - returning to their home city - and New York trio Sunflower Bean.

Fans have two chances to catch singer-songwriter Newton Faulkner, at the O2 Institute in Digbeth, Birmingham, on Saturday or Wolverhampton Slade Rooms on Tuesday. He has

released sixth studio album, *Hit The Ground Running*.

Mods will be out in force at the Robin 2 for a double bill of Secret Affair and The Chords on Saturday. Expect to be dazzled by the light show when space rockers The Hawklords, featuring ex-members of Hawkwind, play the Bilston venue on Sunday. John 'Drumbo' French, a former colleague of experimental blues artist Captain Beefheart brings an incarnation of the late captain's Magic Band to the Robin on

Monday during their farewell tour.

Afro Celt Sound System and The Dhol Foundation are at Birmingham Town Hall tomorrow (Friday) and The Bard of Barking Billy Bragg is at that venue on Saturday.

Three legends perform in Birmingham including, on Monday, Blondie (Arena Birmingham) and Van Morrison (Symphony Hall) then Alice Cooper on Tuesday (Arena Birmingham).



Perfect role for Strictly's Danny

Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* is at Birmingham Hippodrome from Monday to Saturday with Hollyoaks actor and Strictly Come Dancing finalist Danny Mac.

Mac plays Joe Gillis, a down-on-his-luck writer who stumbles into the deluded world of faded silent movie queen Norma Desmond, played by stage star Ria Jones. The show features the songs *The Perfect Year* and *With One Look*. For tickets see birminghamhippodrome.com or call 0844 338 5000.



The comedy just keeps on coming

It's been a funny old autumn, with comedy festivals in Wolverhampton and Birmingham, but the laughs keep on coming.

Following his sold-out show at Wolverhampton Civic Hall this week, Liverpoolian comic, actor and presenter John Bishop brings his *Winging It* tour to Arena Birmingham tomorrow (Friday) for the first of three consecutive nights. Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre hosts Brummie Jo Enright with her *Erdington*

Girl show tomorrow night.

Comedian and activist Mark Thomas brings his *Show That Gambles On The Future*, his vision of what the world could hold in store, to the MAC in Cannon Hill Park, Edgbaston, next Thursday, November 16. The following night James Cook's new stand-up show *Too Many Jameses* is at the MAC's Hegagon Theatre.

Mae Martin is at Birmingham Glee Club tomorrow to kick-off the weekend.

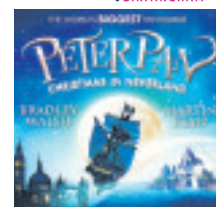
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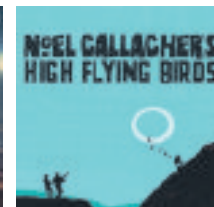
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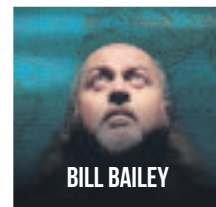
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CHOICE



Alfie Boe

Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance 2017 (BBC1, 9pm)
The Royal Albert Hall in London hosts the annual Festival of Remembrance. Huw Edwards narrates the event as the likes of Tom Odell, Alfie Boe and Lesley Garrett take to the iconic stage alongside the Queen's Colour Squadron and the Royal Marines Band. They will be paying tribute to the men and women who have died in combat since the First World War. The event concludes with the now-iconic poppy petal shower, which sees thousands of poppy petals rain down on the assembled audience - among which sits Her Majesty the Queen - as a symbol of each life lost. Tomorrow morning the annual National Service of Remembrance will take place at the Cenotaph and will be covered by BBC One from 10.20am.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.15 Saturday Kitchen Live.** **10.45** Lord Mayor's Show 2017. **12.05** Football Focus. **12.35** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Rugby League World Cup. **2.00** Live International Rugby Union. Scotland v Samoa (Kick-off 2.30pm). **4.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **5.00** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. **5.35** BBC News. **5.45** Regional Programme. **5.55** Pointless Celebrities.
6.45 **Strictly Come Dancing.** The celebrity couples face yet another round of high-pressure performances, as the competition enters its eighth weekend. Only nine duos remain, and Claudia Winkelman and Tess Daly present as the pairs once more take to the dancefloor to demonstrate whether a week of rigorous training has had any impact on their skills as dancers. This time, though, the pressure is higher than ever, as anyone who drops out of the contest this weekend will miss out on the chance to dance at Blackpool Tower Ballroom next week. As ever, judges Shirley Ballas, Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcy Bussell preside over the contest, awarding each star a score that could give them a crucial lead in avoiding elimination following the public vote.
8.10 **Casualty.** Ethan's secret seems to have been discovered, but Connie's reluctance to treat her condition gives him a more urgent problem to tackle.
9.00 **Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance 2017.** Huw Edwards hosts the annual Festival of Remembrance at London's Royal Albert Hall.
10.40 **BBC News.** Weather; National Lottery Update.
11.00 **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Agnes looks after a robotic baby that has been given to Dermot and Maria to help them prepare for their new arrival, and Cathy develops a crush on her psychology lecturer. (R)
11.30 **The NFL Show.** Mark Chapman is joined by former players Osi Umenyiora and Jason Bell to present highlights of Thursday night's game, plus a look at the major stories shaping the NFL world.
12.00 **Film:** Three Fugitives. (1989) **1.35** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **6.45** Animal Park Summer Special. (R) **7.30** Naomi's Nightmares of Nature. **8.00** Deadly 60. (R) **8.30** Show Me What You're Made Of. **9.00** Saturday Mash-Up!: Two Minutes Silence. **11.00** Rick Stein's Long Weekends. (R) **12.00** Nigella: At My Table. (R) **12.30** Italy Unpacked. (R) **1.30** Wild Brazil. (R) **2.30** Flog It! (R) **3.15** Mastermind. (R) **3.45** Cycling - Track World Cup. **4.45** Live International Rugby Union. Wales v Australia (Kick-off 5.15pm). John Inverdale introduces coverage from the Principality Stadium, as the hosts begin their autumn international campaign.
7.30 **International Rugby Union.** England v Argentina. Jason Mohammad presents highlights of the autumn international at Twickenham. With commentary by Andrew Cotter and Brian Moore, and analysis by Jeremy Guscott.
8.30 **Dad's Army.** A night at the cinema with the rest of the platoon and a black-market toasted cheese sandwich make Mainwaring have an unusual dream in which he is Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo. Comedy first broadcast in 1972, starring Arthur Lowe, John Le Mesurier and Clive Dunn. (R)
9.00 **Film: Elfie Gray.** (2014) Premiere. A Victorian woman is trapped in a loveless marriage to a celebrated art critic from the age of 19. She becomes a model for a painter her husband is promoting and falls in love with him. Inspired by the relationship and aided by a respected writer, she creates scandal by becoming the first woman to seek a divorce. Fact-based period drama, starring Dakota Fanning and Emma Thompson.
10.40 **QI XL.** Bill Bailey, Jan Ravens and Grayson Perry join regular panellist Alan Davies and host Sandi Toksvig for an extended edition of the unconventional quiz.
11.25 **Film: Brothers Peaceful.** (2012) Two brothers' relationship is changed for ever when they serve in the First World War. Drama based on Michael Morpurgo's novel, starring Jack O'Connell.
1.00 **Film:** Free Men. (2011) An Algerian black marketeer in Nazi-occupied France is forced to become a spy, but ends up joining a resistance cell. Second World War drama, with Tahar Rahim and Michael Lindsay. **2.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Emplovable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.30** Gino's Italian Coastal Escape. (R) **11.55** The Harbour. (R) **12.25** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** The X Factor. (R) **2.20** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **2.50** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.40** Catchphrase. (R) **5.25** The Cruise. (R) **5.55** Paul O'Grady: For the Love of Dogs. (R)
6.25 **Regional Programme;** Weather.
6.30 **ITV News;** Weather.
6.45 **New You've Been Framed!** Harry Hill narrates a fictional selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, including a drone flying into a child's face, a unicycling Scotsman and a builder being crushed by a wall.
7.10 **Ninja Warrior UK.** Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara host the third heat, as competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge. (R)
8.10 **The X Factor Live.** Dermot O'Leary hosts as the talent contest enters its third weekend of live eliminations, and the remaining acts step on-stage to face scrutiny at the hands of the judges.
9.40 **The Jonathan Ross Show.** Jamaican singer, model and actress Grace Jones visits the studio, along with former Great British Bake Off winner Nadiya Hussain and comedian Micky Flanagan. Plus, music by Stormzy.
10.40 **ITV News;** Weather.
10.50 **World Cup Qualifier Playoff Highlights.** Jacqui Oatley presents action from all four first-leg matches, including Northern Ireland v Switzerland at Windsor Park and Denmark v Republic of Ireland at the Parken Stadium.
11.55 **Film: Run Fat Boy Run.** (2007) Romantic comedy, with Simon Pegg and Thandie Newton.
1.30 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **6.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.15** Frasier. (R) **7.30** Frasier. (R) **8.05** Frasier. (R) **8.30** The Big Bang Theory. **8.55** The Big Bang Theory. **9.20** The Simpsons. (R) **9.50** The Simpsons. (R) **10.15** The Simpsons. (R) **10.45** The Simpsons. (R) **11.15** The Simpsons. (R) **11.45** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.20** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun. (R) **4.00** Best Laid Plans. **5.00** Grand Designs. (R)
6.00 **Channel 4 News.**
6.30 **Volatile Earth: Killer Floods.** Scientists use state-of-the-art technology to investigate theories that suggest catastrophic floods raged across the Earth thousands of years ago, shaping the planet's landscapes. Aerial photography is combined with the latest forensic techniques to assess bizarre landscapes in America, Iceland and the floor of the English Channel, which might all have been formed by huge floods. Previously seen on More4.
7.30 **Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix Qualifying - Highlights.** Steve Jones presents action from the battle for pole position in the 19th and penultimate round of the season, which takes place at Interlagos in Sao Paulo. Recently crowned world champion Lewis Hamilton won here for the first time last year, becoming the first British victor since Jenson Button in 2012.
9.00 **Film: Terminator Genisys.** (2015) Premiere. A soldier fighting in a post-apocalyptic war against living machines is sent back in time to prevent an attempt to change the past - but when he arrives, he finds that history has been changed beyond recognition - and that a plot is being hatched by an unexpected enemy to destroy the future of the human race. Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and Emilia Clarke.
11.30 **Film: G.I. Joe: Retaliation.** (2013) An elite military team battles a terrorist organisation that has replaced the US president with an imposter. Action adventure sequel, with Wayne Johnston.
1.40 The Last Leg. (R) **2.30** Hollyoaks.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. **10.40** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.40** Santa Makes You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **12.40** **Film:** Operation Christmas. (2016) Drama, starring Tricia Helfer. **2.25** **Film:** All I Want for Christmas. (2013) Festive fantasy, starring Melissa Sagemiller. **4.05** **Film:** A Christmas Song. (2012) Romantic drama, with Natasha Henstridge and Gabe Hogan. **5.05** 5 News Update. **5.10** **Film:** A Christmas Song. (2012) Concluded.
6.10 **Film: The Nine Lives of Christmas.** (2014) A fireman who prefers being single adopts a stray cat, but having a pet makes him long for some human company. Romantic comedy, starring Brandon Routh.
7.10 **5 News Update.**
7.15 **Film: The Nine Lives of Christmas.** (2014) Concluded.
7.50 **NCIS: New Orleans.** A petty officer is found dead in a sports arena clutching a tranquilliser gun, and the team discovers the killing is related to a kidnapping case from the past.
8.45 **NCIS: New Orleans.** A naval lieutenant is tortured and murdered, and the case takes a personal turn for Sebastian when he is kidnapped by the killer and forced to assist in a prison break.
9.40 **5 News Weekend.**
9.45 **Live Boxing.** Josh Taylor v Miguel Vazquez. Coverage of the WBC Silver Super-Lightweight title bout from Royal Highland Centre in Edinburgh. Taylor is undefeated in his professional career thus far, having recorded 10 consecutive victories that include nine wins by stoppage, but he faces arguably his toughest opponent in Vazquez. Though the Mexican may perhaps be on the slide in the tail end of his career he is vastly experienced, having previously held the IBF World Lightweight title from 2010 to 2014, while he boasts a record of 39 wins against just five losses.
11.30 **Football on 5: Goal Rush.** Colin Murray introduces all the goals from Leagues One and Two, including Doncaster Rovers v Rotherham United, Rochdale v Wigan Athletic, and Carlisle United v Yeovil Town.
12.05 SuperCasino. **3.10** When Calls the Heart. (R) **4.40** Access. **4.50** Great Artists. (R) **5.15** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Natural World: Honey Badgers - Masters of Mayhem **8.00** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **9.00** I Know Who You Are **11.35** The Vietnam War **12.30** Top of the Pops: 1984 **1.45** Natural World: Honey Badgers - Masters of Mayhem **2.45** The Mekong River with Sue Perkins **3.45** Close
ITV2
11.35 **Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **12.25** FYI Daily **12.30** **Film:** See Spot Run (2001) **1.30** **Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **2.30** FYI Daily **2.35** **Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **3.40** **Film:** Bean (1997) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45** **Film:** Bean (1997) **5.20** **Film:** Clash of the Titans (2010) **6.20** FYI Daily **6.25** **Film:** Clash of the Titans (2010) **7.25** **Film:** Pacific Rim (2013) **8.25** FYI Daily **8.30** **Film:** Pacific Rim (2013) **10.30** **Celebrity Juice** **10.50** Family Guy **12.45** American Dad! **1.35** Timewasters **2.05** Viral Tap **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
11.00 **Film:** Carry On Follow That Camel (1967) **11.50** Wycliffe **1.00** Foyle's War **5.05** Midsomer Murders **11.05** The Syndicate **12.10** Jane Eyre **2.15** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping
ITV4
11.20 Fishing Impossible **12.25** The Big Fish Off **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Wincanton. Coverage of today's race meetings at Wincanton and Doncaster. **4.00** The Sweeney **5.00** The Car Chasers **6.00** Storage Wars **6.25** Football's Greatest: Johan Cruyff **6.45** Snooker: Champion of Champions Live. Coverage of the second semi-final from the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. **11.15** **Film:** 6 Bullets (2012) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20** **Film:** 6 Bullets (2012) **1.30** The Classic Car Show **2.50** Football's Greatest: Bobby Charlton **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 The Goldbergs **1.25** **Film:** Johnny English Reborn (2011) **3.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** **Film:** The Bourne Legacy (2012) **11.40** Gogglebox **1.50** The Inbetweeners **2.50** Rude Tube **3.45** 2 Broke Girls **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **Film4**
11.00 The Black Knight (1954) **1.00** Short Circuit 2 (1988) **3.10** Song of the Sea (2014) **5.05** Picture Perfect (1997) **7.05** Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb (2014) **9.00** The World's End (2013) **11.10** 30 Days of Night (2007) **1.25** The Anomaly (2014) **3.25** Close



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CHOICE



Elton John

Elton John: The Nation's Favourite Song (ITV, 9pm)

For a fan of the piano man, choosing your favourite song from his back catalogue is like being asked to pick your favourite child. Where does one even begin with such a task? How do you devise a shortlist, discarding potential classics along the way? Whatever the answer, ITV has attempted to make us do just that, and now it's revealing the results of a nationwide poll to unearth the 20 most popular of Elton's tunes. But what will make it to the top of the list? Candle in the Wind is perhaps his most famous work, particularly because it was revamped by him and lyricist Bernie Taupin following Princess Diana's death, but there are plenty to more to go at.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.20** Remembrance Sunday: The Cenotaph. **12.30** Women at War: 100 Years of Service. **1.30** BBC News. Weather. **1.45** Hog It! (R) **2.05** Film: War Horse. (2011) First World War drama, starring Jeremy Irvine. **4.20** Songs of Praise. **4.55** Blue Planet II. (R) **5.55** BBC News.

6.10 Regional Programme.

6.20 **Countryfile.** A special episode for Remembrance Sunday, in which Ellie Harrison discovers how a rural environment can be therapeutic for servicemen and women returning from conflict. She also investigates the vital role played by female canal workers during the Second World War, where Adam Benson visits a school that is teaching farming skills to transform students' lives.

7.20 **Strictly Come Dancing - The Results.** Tess Daly and Claudia Winkelman reveal the results of last night's viewers' votes, and another couple leaves the contest.

8.00 **Blue Planet II.** Creatures that live on coral reefs, including groupers, small predators that scientists believe are as intelligent as chimpanzees. These creatures have a remarkable aptitude for communication to the point where they can interact with other species including octopi and work together to catch prey. Plus, footage of a vast spawning event involving several different species of fish, coral and invertebrates, and time-lapse photography of coral polyps growing and dying, creating a structure visible from space.

9.00 **Howards End.** New series. Period drama based on EM Forster's novel about the lives of three English families at the beginning of the 20th century.

10.00 BBC News.**10.20 Regional Programme.**

10.30 **Alan Shearer: Dementia, Football And Me.** The former England international looks into the potential link between football and dementia, examining some of the latest scientific evidence from British researchers.

11.30 **The Women's Football Show.** A look at the biggest issues in the women's game.

12.05 Ronny Chieng: International Student. **12.35** Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.05 Coast. (R) **6.50** A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.35** Great British Garden Revival. (R) **8.35** Countryfile. (R) **9.30** Live Rugby League World Cup. **1.00** International Rugby Union. (R) **2.00** Live Tennis: ATP World Tour Finals. Coverage of the afternoon session on day one from The O2 in London. **4.30** Cycling: Track Cycling World Cup. Live coverage of the third and final day from Manchester.

6.00 **Remembrance Sunday: The Cenotaph.** David Dimbleby presents highlights of the service from Whitehall, attended by the Prince of Wales.

7.00 **Big Life Fix: Children in Need Special.** One-off special in which Simon Reeve is joined by leading engineers and designers to invent life-changing solutions for three children with severe disabilities. Eight-year-old Josh was born completely blind, a condition that prevents him playing in with his classmates at break time. Eight-year-old Ayala, who has cerebral palsy, would love to play with her twin sister on an equal footing, and 10-year-old Aman struggles with poor memory after suffering brain damage in a car accident. Can the experts help her and the other children improve their lives? (R)

8.00 **Robot Wars.** An experienced contestant returns to defend his legacy in the fourth heat, battling alongside five other contenders through a series of group battles and knock-out rounds.

9.00 **Louis Theroux: Transgender Kids.** Louis travels to San Francisco, where he spends time with children who are undergoing gender-reassignment treatment at UCSF Hospital's Child and Adolescent Gender Centre. (R)

10.00 **Snowfall.** Teddy is given once last chance to put things right, Franklin's uncle introduces him to a potential mentor, and Oso and Lucia go in search of a new business partner.

10.45 **Mock the Week.** Ed Gamble, Milton Jones, Miles Jupp, Nish Kumar and Felicity Ward join host Dara O Briain and regular Hugh Dennis for the topical comedy show. (R)

11.15 **Rugby League World Cup.** Action from the day's final group-stage games.

12.15 Film: The Human Factor. (1979) **2.10** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.10** Holby City. (R) **4.10** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Sooty. **6.10** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **7.00** Mission Empoyable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Ben 10. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Make It Pop. (R) **9.00** Scrambled!: Wishart. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Film: Columbo: Butterfly in Shades of Grey. (1993) **11.25** Tipping Point. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** The X Factor Live. (R) **1.55** Midsomer Murders. (R) **4.00** Prince Harry and Meghan: Truly, Madly, Deeply. (R) **5.00** Sheridan. (R)

6.10 **Regional Programme:** Weather. **6.10** **ITV News:** Weather.

6.30 **The Chase: Celebrity Special.** Martin Roberts, Tracy Edwards, Debbie McGee and Duncan James answer general knowledge questions and work as a team to secure a cash prize for charity. Presented by Bradley Walsh.

7.30 **The X Factor Live.** The third weekend of live shows concludes, with the remaining acts competing to impress the judges and audience and maintain their place in the show. The most popular act of the weekend will win a special prize that money cannot buy. Presented by Dermot O'Leary.

9.00 **Elton John: The Nation's Favourite Song.** A countdown of the singer's 20 most popular songs, chosen by ITV viewers to celebrate his 70th birthday. Elton discusses the stories behind the tracks in a candid conversation with David Walliams, while celebrity fans and friends reveal their favourite numbers mean to them. With contributions from Ed Sheeran, Annie Lennox, Stephen Fry and Elton's longtime songwriting partner Bernie Taupin.

10.30 **ITV News:** Weather. **10.45** **Unbelievable Moments Caught on Camera.** Alastair Stewart presents a second selection of extraordinary footage. (R)

11.45 **Play to the Whistle.** Holly Willoughby hosts the sports-based comedy panel show, in which two teams go head to head in quizzes and physical games. (R)

12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Kevin Can Wait. **6.25** Kevin Can Wait. **6.50** Kevin Can Wait. **7.15** Frasier. (R) **7.40** Frasier. (R) **8.05** The Simpsons. (R) **8.30** The Simpsons. (R) **9.00** The Simpsons. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** Simpsons Day. (R) **12.55** Simpsons Day. (R) **1.25** Simpsons Day. (R) **1.55** Simpsons Day. (R) **2.20** Simpsons Day. (R) **2.50** Simpsons Day. (R) **3.20** Simpsons Day. (R) **3.50** Simpsons Day. (R) **4.15** Simpsons Day. (R) **4.45** Film: Men in Black. (1997) Sci-fi comedy, starring Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 **Britain's Forgotten Army.** Documentary about the thousands of Chinese workers who supported Allied forces in the First World War by digging trenches, maintaining vehicles and dismantling unexploded bombs, but whose vital work went largely unrecognised. The programme uses recently discovered letters, diaries and documents to explore the experiences of this workforce, and features contributions from their living descendants.

8.00 **The Queen's Favourite Animals.** Documentary about the queen's love of animals, from the corgis that have been her lifelong companions to thoroughbred racehorses. The programme features contributions from childhood friends and jockeys who rode her horses to victory, and examines how the queen gained a respected reputation as a champion breeder of not just dogs and horses, but highland cattle.

9.00 **Big Ben: Saving the World's Most Famous Clock.** Documentary about restoration work on the iconic clock tower, which will see the bells silenced for the next four years. Anna Keay, Director of Landmark Trust, goes behind the scenes on this massive project, and talks to Parliament's principal architect and the three clockmakers who have the challenging task of taking the gigantic mechanism apart for the first time in nearly 160 years.

10.30 **Formula 1: Brazilian Grand Prix Highlights.** Steve Jones presents action from the 19th and penultimate round of the season, which took place at Interlagos in Sao Paulo.

12.45 Film: Life on the Limit. (2013) **2.45** The Supertv. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **6.20** Poppy Cat. (R) **6.35** Wissper. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.45** Milkshake! Snapping About. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **7.00** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.40** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.35** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.00** 5 News Special: Remembrance Sunday. **11.05** Film: Let It Snow. (2013) **12.50** Film: On Strike for Christmas. (2010) Drama, starring Daphne Zuniga. **2.30** Film: Just in Time for Christmas. (2015) Premiere. Romantic comedy, starring Eloise Mumford and Michael Stahl-David. **4.20** Film: Northpole. (2014) Premiere. Christmas fantasy, starring Tiffani Thiessen. **5.25** 5 News Update. **5.30** Film: Northpole. (2014) Concluded.

6.10 **Film: Deck the Halls.** (2006) Two neighbours feud over who has the best Christmas lights and end up resorting to desperate measures to outdo each other. Comedy, starring Danny DeVito.

7.10 5 News Update.

7.15 **Film: Deck the Halls.** (2006) Concluded.

8.00 **Rugby on 5: Anglo Welsh Cup Highlights.** Action from the matchday two pool fixtures, which included Ospreys v Wasps, Northampton Saints v Dragons and Scarlets v Exeter Chiefs.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 **MTV EMA 2017: London.** Live coverage of the 24th MTV European Music Awards from Wembley Arena. Rita Ora hosts the show, which features performances by Stormzy, Keshi, the Killers, Demi Lovato, Shawn Mendes, Liam Payne, Travis Scott and Luis Fonsi. Nominees include Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, Foo Fighters and Rag'n'Bone Man, while Natalie Dormer, Madison Beer and Sabrina Carpenter are among the stars presenting awards.

10.55 **Before They Were Stars.** (R) **12.50** Lip Sync Battle UK: Carol Vorderman v Martin Kemp. (R) **1.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Film: Another Cinderella Story. (2008) **4.40** Access. **4.55** Great Artists. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Hedd Wryn: The Lost War Poet **9.00** Shark **10.00** The Sky at Night **10.30** Horizon: Strange Signals from Outer Space! **11.30** I Was There: The Great War Interviews **12.30** War of Words: Soldier-Poets of the Somme **2.00** Balletboyz - Young Men **3.00** Shark **4.00** Close

ITV2

11.00 The X Factor Live **12.20** Take Me Out **1.35** You've Been Framed! **Gold 2.10** Film: Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10** Film: Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **3.50** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **4.50** FYI Daily **4.55** Film: Happy Feet Two (2011) **5.50** Film: Jack the Giant Slayer (2013) **6.50** FYI Daily **6.55** Film: Jack the Giant Slayer (2013) **8.00** Film: Quantum of Solace (2008) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05** Film: Quantum of Solace (2008) **10.15** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad! **12.40** Film: The Nutty Professor (1996) **1.40** FYI Daily **1.50** Film: The Nutty Professor (1996) **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3

12.50 Heidi **2.55** Film: Columbo: The Conspirators (1978) **5.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** The Syndicate **10.10** Honest **11.00** Film: Chicago (2002) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25** Film: Chicago (2002) **1.25** The Knock **2.20** Mr Selfridge **3.10** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.45** Judge Judy **5.45** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

11.45 Storage Wars **12.45** Snooker: Champion of Champions Live. The opening session of the final at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry. **5.15** The Car Chasers **5.40** The Sweeney **6.45** Snooker: Champion of Champions Live. The second session of the final at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry. **11.15** Film: Gascoigne (2015) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35** Film: Gascoigne (2015)

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** The Goldbergs **3.30** The Big Bang Theory: Super Hero Day **8.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Inbetweeners Movie (2011) **11.00** The Inbetweeners **12.05** Gogglebox

Film4

11.00 Holiday Inn (1941) **1.00** Dragonball Evolution (2009) **2.40** Carry On Regardless (1961) **4.30** Hugo (2011) **6.55** Tomorrow, When the War Began (2010) **9.00** The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (2013) **11.45** Priest (2011) **1.30** Storage 24 (2012) **3.20** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Kickboxer, Channel 5, 11.05pm
A martial arts student witnesses his brother being brutally defeated in the ring by a Thai champion in a fight that leaves him paralysed. Vowing revenge, he seeks out the help of a reclusive master, under whose tutelage he hones his skills until he is ready to confront his enemy. Action thriller, starring Jean-Claude Van Damme, Dennis Alexio and Haskell V Anderson. (1989)

TUESDAY
Naughty or Nice, Channel 5, 3.10pm
A woman is accidentally given a magic book used by Santa Claus to find out which children have been bad and good. She uses its power to expose the wicked deeds of those around her, but ends up learning more than she would like, getting into conflict with her neighbours and uncovering her boyfriend's secrets. Festive fantasy, starring Hilarie Burton and Matt Dallas. (2012)



Kickboxer, Monday, Channel 5, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY
Christmas Confessions, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A struggling actress who moved to New York to pursue her dreams returns to the small town she escaped years before for the festive season, where a romance with an old acquaintance shows her that the life she left behind may be better than Broadway. Romance, starring Sarah Lancaster. (2015)

THURSDAY
Angels and Ornaments, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A model of a carol singer hanging from a lovelorn musician's Christmas tree comes to life in the build-up to the festive season. The living ornament decides to help his owner put a recent break-up behind her by matchmaking her with a childhood friend. Romantic fantasy, starring Jessalyn Gilsig. (2014)

FRIDAY
The Chronicles of Riddick, ITV, 10.40pm
Fugitive Riddick evades capture by bounty hunters and steals their spacecraft, only to run into an even bigger threat – fanatical cult members on a sinister mission to kill or convert anyone who crosses their path. Sci-fi adventure sequel, with Vin Diesel. (2004)

Legitimate Tommy struggles to leave the past behind

Whether it being buried alive by a wartime tunnel collapse or beaten to within an inch of his life by Father Hughes' hired muscle, Tommy Shelby has found himself in plenty of tight spots. However, the Birmingham crime boss might just have bitten off more than he can chew as Steven Knight's acclaimed saga Peaky Blinders returns for a fourth series. Cillian Murphy, who plays Tommy, said of the new action-packed run: "In the classic gangster arc, the last season was sort of all about the wealth, the house and all that material stuff. This season is sort of a return to the roots." At the end of the last series, set in 1924, we saw Tommy at what Knight has called the character's "most nihilistic." Having ascended into high society from his humble beginnings in Small Heath, Tommy seemingly threw his own family under the proverbial bus of the law for the criminal acts he made in the effort to save his captured young son. Every Shelby except Tommy was arrested at the leader's luxurious countryside manor after they defied the Russians in a jewel heist and blew up a train. Whether or not they have all wriggled out of the charges will become clear, as the new series begins in December 1925. Thomas Shelby OBE has now acquired unprecedented legitimacy – but the gangster is a lonely man, estranged from his family and focused on business. However, when he receives a mysterious letter on Christmas Eve, he realises that his loved-ones and his empire are in danger of annihilation. As the enemy closes in, Tommy flees his country house and returns to the only safe place he knows: Small Heath, the slum where he grew up. Facing a more determined and sophisticated threat than ever before, the Shelseys must put differences aside, take up arms and fight for survival.

So far, we know little of this new danger other than it is a new criminal organisation "of a different dimension," headed by a ruthless crime boss (Adrien Brody), and according to Knight, it will represent the Shelseys' "biggest threat" in the saga to date. Knight is thrilled to have Oscar-winner Brody on board as the story develops. He says: "Adrien genuinely was the actor in my head when I wrote the part. I'm sure he will be a formidable presence." Other new cast members this time around include Aidan Gillen (Game of Thrones) and Charlie Murphy (Happy Valley), who will be joining the likes of Murphy, Helen McCrory, Tom Hardy and Charlotte Riley. Knight adds: "We have a dream team gathered for series four, coming to us for love of the show, which is great." "Adrien Brody, Aidan Gillen and Charlie Murphy give us a wealth of talent to work with, and with Tom Hardy and Charlotte Riley returning we couldn't have hoped for more."



Cillian Murphy stars in Peaky Blinders, Wednesday, BBC2, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Children in Need Rocks the 80s BBC1, 8.30pm
The first Children in Need telethon was broadcast in 1980 – and now the charity is going back to that decade with a star-studded concert at the SSE Arena, Wembley. Fearnie Cotton and Sara Cox introduce performances by acts including A-ha, Bananarama, Boy George, Erasure, Europe, Imagination featuring Lee John, Jason Donovan, Mica Paris, Nick Heyward, OMD and UB40 featuring Ali, Astro and Mickey. And for the younger viewers, there's X Factor winner Louisa Johnson, who will be getting into the Eighties spirit even though she wasn't born until 1998. As well as hearing some much-loved tunes, we'll also be getting all the backstage gossip from Roman Kemp – and a few reminders of how Children in Need has been changing young people's lives for 37 years.

TUESDAY
Live International Football ITV, 7.30pm
England v Brazil (Kick-off 8.00pm). Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the friendly encounter, which takes place at Wembley Stadium, as Gareth Southgate's men continue their preparations for

next summer's World Cup in Russia. These sides last met back in June 2013 when an entertaining match – the first to be held at the renovated Maracana in Rio de Janeiro – finished 2-2. The teams had also played each other earlier on that year at Wembley, when goals from Wayne Rooney and Frank Lampard gave the Three Lions their first victory over Brazil since March 1990. With analysis from Lee Dixon, Ryan Giggs and Ian Wright, and commentary by Clive Tyldesley and Glenn Hoddle.

WEDNESDAY
DIY SOS: The Million Pound Build for Children in Need BBC1, 8pm
The DIY SOS team descend on Swansea to tackle one of their biggest challenges to date, as they build a centre and supported housing for young people in care and leaving care. This special programme also shares the stories from some of Wales' most vulnerable young people as well as the founder of the Roots Foundation Wales, a charity that supports young

people in and leaving care. The team, with the help of hundreds of volunteers, build a bespoke new centre and transitional flats from the ground up for Roots, a charity, part-funded by BBC Children in Need despite storms and a tight 11-day build schedule.

THURSDAY
Love, Lies and Records BBC1, 9pm
Births, deaths and marriages – it's all in a day's work for registrars. So, no wonder Kay Mellor, the writer who brought us Fat Friends and In the Club, thought a register office would make the perfect setting for a six-part drama series. Ashley Jensen leads the cast as Kate Dickenson, who is anxious about her colleagues' reaction to the news that she's about to be promoted to Superintendent – although she doesn't anticipate her fellow registrar James making a big announcement



Children in Need 2017, Friday, BBC1, 7.30pm

of his own or a disgruntled co-worker threatening to expose a dark secret from her past. Just to add to the pressure, Kate is dealing with problems at home, not to mention her concerns about an upcoming wedding where the bride and groom don't appear to speak the same language.

FRIDAY
Children in Need 2017 BBC1, 7.30pm
It's that time of the year again when the nation's celebrities urge us to dig deep for a good cause. This year's fundraising extravaganza is hosted by Tess Daly, Graham Norton, Mel Giedroyc, Ade Adepitan, Rochelle and Marvin Humes, and there are plenty of other stars pitching in as well. The highlights include former and current Blue Peter presenters taking part in a special edition of Strictly Come Dancing, while judge Craig Revel Horwood also crops up as Miss Hannigan with the West End cast of Annie. However, even Miss Hannigan will struggle to compete with the evening's other Queen of Mean, Anne Robinson, who returns to host a star-studded round of The Weakest Link. There's also a musical interlude courtesy of the EastEnders, while the Countryfile team swap their wellies for cowboy boots.

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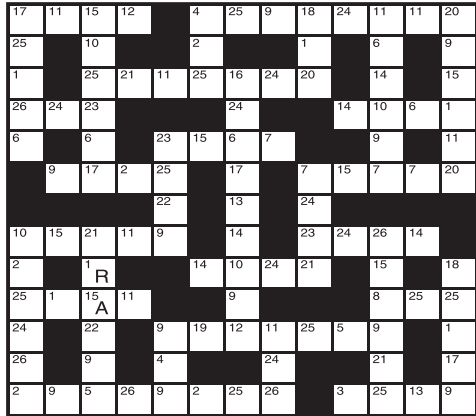
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BRAIN GYM

No.455

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
O	R	Q	G	L	X	D	T	E	F	Z	W	U													
I	P	J	C	S	H	M	Y	B	A	V	N	K													

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

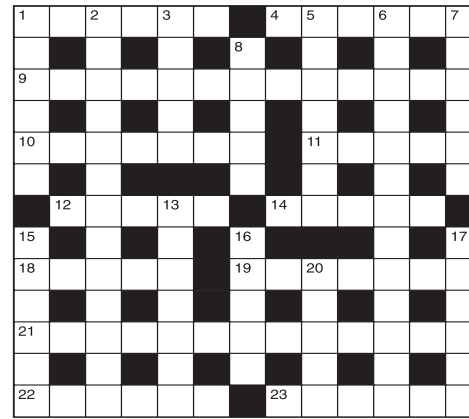
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Woollen material for a head-dress the French sent back (6)
4. They are used for securing a body of sailors in the ship (6)
9. Properly managed, like a successful orchestra (4-9)
10. Regarding a kind of glass (7)
11. It's routine for the sailor to be included in strike (5)
12. See 2 Down.
14. A prison in a state of agitation (5)
18. One in dole confusion reduced the friction (5)
19. Water container for one who puts up a tent (7)
21. Country clothes? (8,5)
22. Skewers, we hear, for pieces of meat (6)
23. Criticises what may be used for house cover (6)

Down

1. In addition, a toff! (2,4)
2. & 12Ac. Use every device when playing the organ! (4,3,3,3,5)
3. Plants displaying a bit of xerophytic activity (5)
5. Puts in a form of words - they are used for lying (7)
6. Number of staff allowed for the household (13)
7. Awkwardly seated but staidly composed (6)
8. At home, I leave Jones, the architect (5)
13. Grazing land providing something soft near the harbour (7)
15. Spikes will cause a broken piston (6)
16. Use a rose for a cluster of flowers (5)
17. Decisive events will produce an increase in the Civil Service (6)
20. Currently variable (5)



Quick Clues:

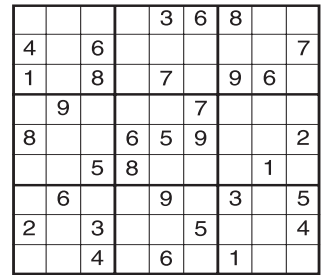
Across

1. Cotton cloth (6)
4. Impede (6)
9. Holding irrational beliefs (13)
10. Friendly (7)
11. Christmas hymn (5)
12. Adhere (5)
14. Stanza (5)
18. Plunder (5)
19. Answered (7)
21. Unsuitable (13)
22. Stretch (6)
23. Abandon (6)

Down

1. Careless (6)
2. Actually (2,5,2,4)
3. Pulsate (5)
5. Object (7)
6. Defer action (13)
7. Outcome (6)
8. Scatter (5)
13. Make less expensive (7)
15. Achieve success (6)
16. Earlier (5)
17. Coming (6)
20. Cleanse (5)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

6	1	2	8	9	4	3	5	7
5	8	7	1	2	3	6	4	9
9	3	4	5	7	6	2	8	1
4	5	3	2	8	1	9	7	6
1	2	8	7	6	9	4	3	5
7	9	6	4	3	5	1	2	8
8	7	1	6	4	2	5	9	3
2	6	9	3	5	7	8	1	4
3	4	5	9	1	8	7	6	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Out of service; 7 Sided; 8 Incur; 9 Use; 10 Chameleon; 11 Petard; 12 Gemini; 15 Hard lines; 17 Lac; 18 Amuse; 19 Ivory; 21 Person of note. Down: 1 One jump ahead; 2 Fed; 3 Endear; 4 Voiceless; 5 Cache; 6 Frankincense; 7 Sheet; 10 Carolers; 13 Inlay; 14 Ensign; 16 Rouse; 20 Off.
QUICK - Across: 1 Straight away; 7 Swell; 8 Preen; 9 Tie; 10 Propagate; 11 Option; 12 Limpid; 15 Inspiring; 17 Arc; 18 Globe; 19 Haven; 21 Protestation.
Down: 1 Shortcomings; 2 Ire; 3 Hollow; 4 Appealing; 5 Arena; 6 Interdiction; 7 Sweet; 20 Prominent; 13 Plain; 14 Sights; 16 Spoor; 20 Via.

Quiz

1. On which island is Tokyo?
2. Which South American revolutionary was known as The Liberator?
3. Who formed the Free French in the UK in WW2?
4. Which Gothic horror story is subtitled The Modern Prometheus?
5. Which OT prophet was carried to heaven in a fiery chariot?
6. For which fish is Canada's Fraser River famous?
7. With which football team did multi-millionaire Sir Jack Hayward enjoy a long association?
8. In Scandinavian mythology, who were the three goddesses of fate?
9. In which country is the yuan the standard monetary unit?
10. Which peninsula contains much of Denmark?

Last week's solutions:

- Quiz: 1 Mole; 2 Sir Henry Morgan; 3 Russia;
4 Methodism; 5 Achilles; 6 Hamilton; 7 Dog;
8 Basketball; 9 The Loch Ness Monster;
10 Selective breeding.

Niner: SYNCOPATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

53169 gives a family member,
423 gives a second family member,
7538 gives a third family member.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---



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I could barely believe my eyes!

WE peered out through the window of the hide and waited. This was the heart of brown bear territory in eastern Finland, close to the Russian border.

Our extended weekend break had taken us to Europe's last great wilderness to re-connect with nature. We didn't have to wait long. Within minutes, a dark lumbering figure emerged from the forest of ancient pines into the marshland before us, sniffing the peaty earth and glancing cautiously around.

Within moments a second bear lolloped onto the scene, followed by a third. "Bears are very shy creatures," said our host Kari, who runs the nearby Boreal Wildlife Centre where we were to stay the night. "They spend their time deep in the forest away from humans. It would be very rare to experience one while hiking. You have to come to the hide."

ODOUR

Reassuring news for someone who was planning a six-mile forest hike the following day.

The hides are fitted with very tall flues to expel the odour of humans high above the bears' nostrils. The furious clicking of cameras from my fellow wildlife watchers didn't seem to faze this trio, and our excitement was palpable as they moved closer to the hide and began snuffling around in the muddy gloop just a few metres away.

We were close enough to smell their strong musky odour, see their battle scars and massive paws. The biggest of the bears glanced up, seemingly meeting my gaze. I felt like I had met royalty. Forest royalty. Back at base camp on the edge of Lake Viiksimo, we tucked into a hearty salmon stew and chatted to a couple of renowned wildlife photographers who regularly visit Boreal Wildlife Centre for shoots. Wild Taiga, the region

Early autumn is a great time to see wild bears



where we were staying, is not just home to brown bears. Wolves, wolverine, elk, wild reindeer, golden eagles and capercaillie all roam this vast wilderness. Kari regaled us with tales of the forest until late into the evening.

It's not hard to see why Lonely Planet places Finland as the third best travel destination in the world. It is the world's cleanest and greenest country, according to the Environmental Performance Index. Its air is among the purest on the planet and the water so clean you can drink straight from most of its lakes. It has a population of barely six million, yet covers an area larger than

France. It is 70 per cent forest. Nature-loving Finns have learned to live off the land and this is reflected in their culture. The right to roam – known as Everyman's Right – is set in law and means you can walk, ski, cycle or ride freely in all natural areas, even if they are privately owned.

We had arrived in Finland the day before our bear adventure. The connecting flight from Helsinki to Kajaani in the Kainuu region was by prop aircraft, a clue we were travelling somewhere remote. As I stepped off the plane, the pure, clear night air filled my

The privately-owned lakeside Kalevala Hotel



lungs – and a far cry from the polluted haze I had left behind in London just a few hours ago. Our taxi flashed past countless shimmering black lakes and the dark silhouette of limitless pine forests. It was midnight when we arrived at our first port of call, the lakeside Kalevala Hotel in Kuhmo.

Pulling back the curtains the next day, was the first of many breathtaking moments of our four-day trip. The view was spectacular. A vast lake sparkled in the early morning sun, surrounded by ancient pines as far as the eye could see. A treat not to be missed. KIM BENNETT

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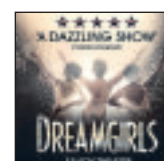
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Semi-detached three-bed home in favoured location

A three-bedroomed semi-detached residence on the favoured 'poets corner' development of The Straits in Lower Gornal, Dudley, in Tennyson Road, is for sale through Hunters at £189,950.

The accommodation briefly comprises of an entrance hallway, an open plan style lounge/dining room, a kitchen, three bedrooms and a bathroom.

There is also a driveway providing off-road parking, a garage which is set back from the property and a long rear garden. This is an ideal family home and viewing is highly recommended.

In more detail the entrance hall has wooden flooring. The lounge is open plan to the dining room and has laminate flooring, as does the dining room.

The kitchen has a selection of wall-mounted and base fitted units with work surfaces over, a stainless steel sink and drainer, space for an oven, a washing machine, fridge freezer, splash-back, ceramic tiled flooring and a door to the garden.

Upstairs, bedroom one lies to the front and has spotlights and laminate flooring. Bedroom two is positioned to the rear of the property and features part wooden panelling to the walls.

Bedroom three has views over the frontage and has a storage cupboard.

The bathroom is to the rear of the property. It includes a low level flush WC, a semi-pedestal wash hand basin, a shower over the bath, ceramic splash-back tiling, laminate flooring and a heated towel rail.

Outside, this home has a long rear garden with a patio/lawn and a selection of shrubs and trees.

"Life never stops moving. And when there's a big change in your life, we're ready", said a spokesman for Hunters Estate & Letting Agents.

"We put people first and we understand that there is much more to moving than just getting the best price for your property."

LOWER GORNAL £189,950



TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Hunters

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EMAIL: sedgley@hunters.com

KEY FEATURES

Semi-detached

3 bedrooms

Large lounge/diner

Well presented

Garage



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Very popular residential area for this bungalow

THE STRAITS
£240,000

An extended detached bungalow in an extremely popular residential area, 5, Ruskin Avenue, The Straits, Dudley, has substantial and versatile accommodation.

It is for sale through Skitts at £240,000 with no chain.

Having central heating, double glazing, off-road parking, a garage and a private rear garden.

A driveway provides off-road parking for numerous vehicles adjoining a lawned fore-garden.

There is a porch and an entrance hall, a living room with a coal-effect gas fire, a kitchen with a built-in appliances. Upstairs are the three bedrooms and a family bathroom with a modern white suite.

Call 01902 686868 or visit www.skitts.net



Well-presented and spacious family home is new to market

STOURBRIDGE
£375,000

<<<

New to the property market, this beautifully presented and rather large, detached family home in Belfry Drive, Wollaston, Stourbridge, is for sale through Taylors at £375,000.

With gas central heating and double glazing, its accommodation briefly comprises of an entrance hall, a guests cloakroom/WC, a sitting room, a dining room, a family breakfast kitchen, a utility, four bedrooms (master with an en-suite) and house bathroom.

The home lies in an end position with an additional parking space, a double width block paved drive, a garage and a lovely enclosed level rear garden.

For further information, or to book a viewing to see if this is the ideal next home for you, contact Taylors on 01384 395555.

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New



KINGSWINFORD, Ashwood

A SUBSTANTIAL & INDIVIDUAL DETACHED FAMILY HOME which enjoys a superb canal side and rural setting. The accommodation is EXTREMELY SPACIOUS and VERSATILE throughout, includes THREE BEDROOMS. With a very large DRIVEWAY, GARAGE plus a further Large Garage and extensive gardens. EPC D

£475,000



COSELEY, Coppice Road

Outstanding, EXCEPTIONALLY SPACIOUS, recently redecorated, Freehold, gas centrally heated, double glazed Semi-Detached comprising: kitchen, open-plan lounge-diner, bathroom, THREE BEDROOMS. SELF-CONTAINED 'GRANNY' (or similar) ANNEXE providing Lounge, Bedroom, Kitchen, Shower Room. CONTRACTOR'S GARAGE approx. 16'3" x 14'1" with roller door & gated/secured parking. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £249,950

New



SEDGLEY, Fir Tree Drive, High Arcal

NO UPWARD CHAIN. A tastefully presented semi-detached property occupying a corner position on a quiet cul-de-sac in the popular High Arcal estate in Sedgley. This modern family home benefits from central heating and double glazing as well as an entrance hall, guest W/C, well-appointed lounge, kitchen, diner, THREE BEDROOMS, family bathroom, good sized rear garden with parking for multiple vehicles to front. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £159,950



LOWER GORNAL, The Alley

Situated on corner position in the popular area of Lower Gornal this DETACHED property is within walking distance of Gornal Village. As well as having gas central heating & double glazing this family home also boasts: hall, living room, dining room, fitted-kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, stunning shower room, detached garage, greenhouse, gardens to front side & rear with parking for multiple vehicles. VIEWING ESSENTIAL. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £234,950



SEDGLEY, Dudley Road (Off Algar Grange)

NO UPWARD CHAIN. REFURBISHED, gas centrally heated, double glazed semi detached dormer bungalow within level walking distance of village. 'Transformed' recently to an exemplary 'AS NEW' specification comprising entrance vestibule, hall, lounge, dining room (occasional 3rd bedroom), bedroom, bathroom, refitted kitchen. To first floor large bedroom & shower room. Parking, rear garden. EPC: C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £219,950



KINGSWINFORD, Ashdale Close

Enjoying a secluded location, overlooking the open Green opposite, this LINK DETACHED FAMILY HOME whilst close to amenities, offers an EXTREMELY WELL PROPORTIONED layout which includes THREE EXCELLENT SIZED BEDROOMS. With an EASY MAINTENANCE LANDSCAPED GARDEN, rear DRIVEWAY and GARAGE. EPC D

£195,000



COSELEY, The Paddock

Set in well-regarded cul-de-sac & conveniently situated for local shopping facilities & transport routes including Coseley Train station & enjoying views overlooking cricket grounds to rear. An impressive, gas centrally heated & mostly double glazed Link-Detached which comprises: porch, living room, refitted dining kitchen, conservatory, utility room, guest WC, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, garage, rear garden with block-paved driveway offering parking to front. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £179,950



COSELEY, Lansdowne Close, Bramford estate

CLEAR (WITHIN 20 METRES) MINING SEARCH! Extremely well presented semi-detached property located on the very much sought after BRAMFORD ESTATE. Benefiting from having gas central heating and double glazing, this EXTENDED family home also comprises: hallway, living room, extended dining room, kitchen, utility, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, attractive garden, driveway to front. NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £174,950



KINGSWINFORD, Rangeways Road

A SEMI DETACHED FAMILY HOME which is well placed close to shops and popular schools. The accommodation is SPACIOUS and WELL PRESENTED throughout and includes THREE BEDROOMS With BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY, LARGE SIDE GARAGE with UTILITY ROOM and to the rear is a good sized tiered garden. EPC D

£165,000



WOODSETTON, Rosalind Avenue

STYLISH, ENLARGED! Gas centrally heated, majority UPVC double glazed semi detached in stunning condition within walking distance of park, shops, schools etc comprising: hall, through lounge with 'minister' style fireplace, magnificent 19'2" dining kitchen with an extensive range of 'high gloss white' fitted units, lobby, shower room & further utility room. Three bedrooms, bathroom with white suite toilet. Store, garden, wide frontage. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £155,000



LOWER GORNAL, Haslingden Crescent

An extremely well presented modern intermediate property which is ideal for first time buyers or movers looking to downsize. Benefiting from entrance hall, guest W/C, fitted-kitchen, lounge-diner, TWO BEDROOMS, double glazing, gas central heating, attractive bathroom with enclosed rear garden and parking. Offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC Rating C SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £145,000



TIPTON, Wrens Avenue

Maintaining many of its original features and being situated in the popular Foxyards in Tipton, this traditional semi-detached offers huge potential. Benefiting from driveway and enclosed rear garden, it also has entrance porch, hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, rear hall, guest W/C, garage, THREE BEDROOMS, shower room and separate W/C. Also offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. ●●CLEAR MINE SEARCH●● EPC Rating TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £139,950



WOODSETTON, Sedgley Road, Swann Village

A SPACIOUS, part uPVC double glazed, semi detached briefly comprising: porch, reception hall, lounge, brick/uPVC double glazed CONSERVATORY, upgraded kitchen. TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, reappointed bathroom. INTEGRAL GARAGE, garden. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £135,000



COSELEY, Rainbow Street

A conveniently positioned semi-detached property located in the popular Coseley area briefly comprising: entrance hall, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, THREE BEDROOMS, large frontage with potential for parking and enclosed rear garden. The property is also offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN. EPC: F SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950



UPPER GORNAL, Nethergate

Significantly modernised, gas centrally heated, double glazed two (previously three) semi detached with NO UPWARD CHAIN comprising: Porch, inner hallway, fitted cloak room, through lounge (double French doors out to garden at rear), refitted kitchen with an extensive range of gloss white units & various integrated appliances, store. Gallery landing, two bedrooms, bathroom with white suite. Good sized lawned rear garden & block paved foregarden. EPC: C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £120,000



PENSNETT, Primrose Park

AN IMPRESSIVE END MEWS RETIRMENT BUNGALOW, delightfully located within this sought after and secure WARDEN CONTROLLED gated development, including beautifully maintained gardens, offering a VERY WELL PRESENTED One Double Bedroom layout with an impressive CONSERVATORY. EPC C

No upward chain

Price: £94,950



TIPTON, Geneva Road

Taylors Estate Agents are now in receipt of an offer for the sum of £86,000 for 49 Geneva Road, Tipton, West Midlands, DY4 8DU. Anyone wishing to place an offer on this property should contact Taylors Estate Agents, 2a Dudley Street, Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands, DY3 1SB, 01902 880888 before exchange of contracts. Freehold double glazed, gas centrally heated (both as seen) 3 BEDROOM intermediate starter home for improvement. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £90,000



LOWER GORNAL, Temple Street

NO UPWARD CHAIN. A gas centrally heated (combi boiler), uPVC double glazed EXTENDED intermediate terrace for improvement. Conveniently situated within walking distance of the village, the accommodation includes: living room, 17'8" dining kitchen, rear lobby, bathroom, cellar. Two bedrooms. Garden. EPC: E SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £85,000



Exceptional home is very lavishly fitted out in style

DUDLEY
£299,950



Quite exceptional, lavishly appointed and comprehensively upgraded, this four-bedroom detached property in Berkswell Close, Dudley, is new to the property market.

Also featuring a 17ft lounge, and positioned in a short cul-de-sac just off Charlecote Drive, it is for sale through Taylors at £299,950.

Its extremely spacious accommodation includes an imposing reception hall, a fitted cloakroom/WC, the elegant 17ft lounge, a separate dining room with a bow window, a re-fitted breakfast kitchen with a fine range of Old English cream units and many integrated appliances and a re-fitted utility room. There is a magnificent principal bedroom suite with many built-in units, a walk through dressing room section with a reappointed bathroom beyond.

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THORNLEIGH Lower Gornal

Price £225,000

Presenting to the market a modern TWO bedroom DETACHED bungalow with a DETACHED GARAGE, situated in an enviable location in Lower Gornal. Offered with NO UPWARD CHAIN

EPC rating: TBC



MASLIN DRIVE, Hurst Hill

Price £149,950

- A traditional semi-detached
- THREE bedrooms
- Conservatory
- Contemporary kitchen

EPC rating: TBC



CHARNWOOD AVENUE,

Price £279,950

- A beautiful 'dormer' house
- Sedgley location
- FOUR bedrooms
- Full of potential

EPC rating: F



TENNYSON ROAD

Price £194,950

- The Straits, Lower Gornal
- Modern semi-detached
- Three bedrooms
- Open plan lounge/diner

EPC rating: C



LARCH GROVE

Price £259,950

- A Four bed detached
- Cul-de-sac in Sedgley
- Modern spacious kitchen
- Utility room & WC

EPC rating: C

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Experts predict steady growth in housing market

The housing market in the UK is set to see steady and stable growth in the next five to 10 years rather than a boom or bust, marking a major change, according to a new analysis.

Average price growth of 2.5 per cent per annum is forecast as the market is likely to be still adjusting to varying levels of political and legislative change, says the report from real estate firm JLL.

It explains that a range of factors are colluding to deliver more moderate UK house price growth over the next five to 10 years. However, and despite the intrusion of Brexit, the outcome will be a more stable and healthy UK housing market, it concludes.

JLL describes the change as 'structural' and says it might take some getting used to but in the end it will be good for Government, the economy, buyers, sellers and industry participants and lay the foundations for a less volatile UK housing market in the medium term.

It also says that Brexit will not get in the way of a more stable and healthy UK housing market which will be free from 'great capital boosts'.

The report also forecasts that sales will slow, averaging 1.23 million per annum over the next five years, and housing starts are set to remain buoyant averaging 206,000 per annum over the next five years.

The lettings market will be a little more robust, according to the forecast, but rental growth will still be more muted than usual at 2% per annum in 2018 and 2019.

But it also says that the rental market will continue to expand, both because of continued unaffordability in the sales market but also supported by the growing trend of renting by choice. It suggests rents will rise steadily by around 2.5% per annum from 2020 to 2022.

The report says that house price growth will be stronger outside of the less affordable London and South East regions.

Overseas property investors are expected to play a lesser role going forward in the London property market as stamp duty and income tax changes impact on their potential returns.

But JLL says that a strong economy, especially post-2019, will drive housing demand and push up prices.

In central London the market is likely to be steady with the firm forecasting that demand for new developments will remain muted over the next two years until the Brexit deal becomes clearer.

A bedrock of demand will continue from domestic owner occupiers supported by a steady stream of international buyers and investors.

It is also forecasting that activity in the prime central London market will be subdued for the next two years with continued pressure on pricing especially at the top end of the market where stamp duty impacts are greatest.

Homeowners urged not to panic as base rate rise hits mortgages

The base rate rise is a new experience for the estimated 2.6 million home-owners who have only ever seen static or falling rates after getting on the property ladder in the past decade.

Years of low rates mean mortgage costs have reached record lows.

But in recent weeks, there have been signs of mortgage costs edging up as speculation over a possible base rate rise has mounted – giving borrowers a taste of what could be to come.

When setting mortgage rates, lenders take the base rate into account as well as other factors, such as a lender's own borrowing costs.

Whether or not a home-owner sees an immediate impact from the base rate rise also depends on what type of deal they are on.

Linked

Some mortgages are directly linked to the base rate while others are not.

Fixed-rate deals cushion borrowers against any immediate impact of a base rate increase.

More than nine in 10 (94%) new mortgages taken out in the second quarter of 2017 were fixed-rate, according to trade body UK Finance.

Looking at the stock of all outstanding home-owner mortgages taken out since 2005, more than half of customers across the UK are currently on a fixed rate. Of the 9.2 million outstanding home-owner mortgages, 8.1 million are regulated.

Of these, 4.4 million are on a fixed rate, with 3.7 million on some sort of variable rate. The remaining 1.1 million are unregulated mortgages, handed out before



2005. Home-owners on a variable rate mortgage may find themselves particularly vulnerable to a base rate rise.

Bank rate tracker mortgages track the movements of the base rate, plus a certain percentage margin specified by the lender.

Meanwhile, some borrowers may be on their lender's standard variable rate (SVR), after finishing an introductory deal. The SVR will be determined by the mortgage lender.

David Hollingworth, of broker London & Country, said the rates on some mortgage deals being offered by lenders have already increased recently.

Impact

Property expert Sarah Beeny said people who have become home-owners in the past decade and have never had to deal with the impact of a base rate rise on their mortgage costs should not panic.

Offering reassurance to aspiring first-time buyers, Rachel Springall, a finance expert at Moneyfacts.co.uk, said: "Those hoping to get on to the property ladder shouldn't be too disheartened by a rate rise as they still have an abundance of deals to choose from in the market for various deposits.

"They will, however, need to reassess their finances, as a more expensive mortgage will eat into their monthly income."

Postive reaction to proposed letting fees changes

Changes in the letting industry, including a ban on fees in England, should not be viewed onerously with the details outlined in the Government's draft bill regarded as creating clarity and transparency.

The industry has reacted positively to the draft which is now out to consultation but the issue of a cap on security deposits is still causing niggles. Landlord organisations had campaigned against the cap which will go ahead.

Initially the cap on security deposits was to be set at no more than four weeks' rent. However, the Government now proposes in the draft bill to extend the cap to six weeks' rent after concerted lobbying from landlord groups. The National Landlords Association (NLA) had argued that an arbitrary cap of four weeks' rent would be damaging to certain groups of prospective tenants and could have the counter-productive effect of making it harder for some households to secure suitable accommodation in the sector.

"Since the plans were announced we have been lobbying the Government and we met with the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Alok Sharma, in September in order to press him to rethink his plans for a cap, taking into account the needs of those living and working in the private rented sector," said Chris Norris, NLA head of policy.



"The NLA is happy that the Government has listened to the evidence we presented on behalf of our members. Whilst we remain disappointed that the Government continues to believe a cap is necessary, extending it to six weeks rent will reduce those households and landlords disadvantaged by the policy significantly," he added.

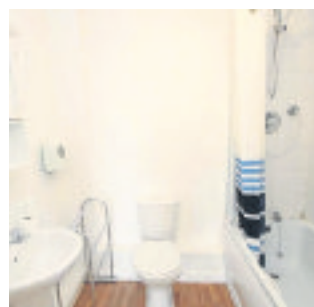
David Cox, chief Executive of the Association of Residential Lettings Association (ARLA), also lobbied on behalf of its members. "We are very pleased to see that the Government has listened to our call and increased maximum security deposits from four to six weeks and are encouraged that it appears those tenants who wish to break their

contract will have to cover the legitimate costs of finding a new tenant," he said.

He revealed that ARLA has discussed the proposal to ban letting agents fees with Government ministers and officials many times. "Having now seen the draft bill, it is essential that during its passage through Parliament, this legislation is shaped to make it fair to consumers, while supporting businesses to carry out the work necessary to create and maintain successful tenancies, including legal requirements such as Right to Rent checks," he added.

The Residential Landlords Association (RLA) is also pleased that the cap on security deposits has been extended. "It is welcome that greater clarity is being provided to the sector and that Ministers have clearly listened on a number of important points. Most notably, proposing to cap security deposits at six weeks rather than one month recognises concerns about the need to ensure protections against tenants' default on rent payment and damage to property," said Alan Ward, RLA chairman.

"Ultimately though, cutting costs for tenants means boosting the supply of homes for rent. Whilst we recognise the Government's objectives, this would best be achieved by using the Budget to encourage good landlords to build more homes," he added.



Two-bedroom top floor flat offers spacious accommodation

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An investment purchase only, this modern two-bedroomed top floor apartment in Elbow Street, Cradley Heath, is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £89,950.

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The property benefits from a secure entry system and allocated parking and comprises a spacious lounge, fitted kitchen, two double bedrooms and a bathroom. The apartment also has double glazing throughout.

In more detail the kitchen has a range of modern units to include a single drainer sink unit, base units with worktops over, matching wall units, an oven and hob with an extractor over.

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The property also benefits from gas central heating, double glazing, a private rear garden and gated driveway to the front. In more detail the large lounge/dining room has a fireplace.

Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667.

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• Two bedrooms
• Communal grounds
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• Two bedrooms
• Ideal for first time buyer
• Two reception rooms
• EPC RATING D



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YOUR WEEKLY
GUIDE TO THE
BEST CARS ON
THE MARKET

MG has a recipe for success in compact SUV sector

By John Griffiths

There's a growing – almost unprecedented – demand for SUV-styled, or crossover, cars which is soaring ahead of any other section of the market.

It doesn't seem to be a passing fad, either, as over the past few years nearly every manufacturer has added one, two or even three to its range to woo buyers.

Now MG has added a second, compact, SUV to its stable – the ZS (not to be confused with the rebadged Rover 45 hatchback of yesteryear).

MG has high hopes for the ZS – billing its launch as a new era for the company – with high hopes of doubling its sales here, which have grown from a mere 500 a year in 2009 to 4,500 last year as it grows its model range and dealer network.

It's a bold prophecy for a new vehicle going head on with a multitude of established rivals, but MG has some good reasons for this.

Well-equipped

Starting from £12,495 it undercuts big-selling rivals by several thousands of pounds, it's one of the most spacious in its class and is well-equipped – plus it comes with a full seven-year, 80,000-mile warranty.

MG Motor claim it is the best car they've ever built since its re-emergence in 2007, after the company became part of the China-based SAIC Motor company.

Certainly it has a new design philosophy which gives it real on-road presence, and that extends into the cabin which has an airy, high quality feel. A bold new grille, LED running lights and sculpted body architecture offer a purposeful, athletic appearance.

It also comes with a choice of two efficient petrol engines – one a brand new, 1.0 litre turbo, a little smoothie with 111Ps of power on tap.

While classified as a 'compact; SUV (it is smaller than its GS stablemate) the ZS is no tiddler. Deceptively roomy, there is plenty of room for five inside: rear seat passengers in particular have generous leg room more typically found in a class above, and there's class-leading boot space of 448 litres, rising to 1,375 litres with the rear seats folded.

There's the high seating position (with good hip height for easy access) and good all-round visibility, two of the criteria essential to SUV owners.

There are large, well bolstered seats to hold driver and passenger firmly but comfortably,



There's a new design philosophy which gives the ZS a real on-road presence and that extends into the cabin which has a quality feel

and a well-designed and clear fascia, with soft-touch materials (you can opt for stitched leather), and an eight-inch colour touchscreen on higher grade models for satnav, full connectivity to linked smartphones, audio and telephone functions.

MG expects many of its customers will go for flagship Exclusive versions, as at £15,495 it still undercuts many rivals – and looks even better when you compare trim and specification levels.

MG says it conducted millions of miles of development testing to hone the car to UK road conditions and driver preferences. Springs, dampers and tyres are specific to UK models.

It generally rides smoothly and handles much like a hatchback, regardless of its extra height. There are three switchable steering modes – normal, urban (very light for town driving and parking) and sport, which gives a heavier feel and more driver feedback when you're pushing on.

Both of the petrol engine choices are quiet in operation, adding to the feeling of refinement.

One of them is a 1.5 litre, normally aspirated four cylinder with 109Ps of power, mated to a five speed manual gearbox which is capable from going from standstill to 60mph in 10.4 seconds and averaging very nearly 50mpg, with a CO2 rating of 129g/km.

Slick

The other is the new 1.0 litre, three cylinder unit which comes with a slick six-speed automatic transmission. It has slightly more power (111Ps) and more torque (160Nm) thanks to the supercharger. While according to the figures it's a little slower (12.4 seconds) off the mark, the turbo and the responsive auto box mean it is noticeably quicker when it comes to in-gear acceleration – for example the 50 to 70mph band you need for overtaking or joining a motorway.

Its official fuel average is 44.9mpg, with a 144g/km CO2 rating.

Insurance ratings are 10E/11E, depending on model.

All models come with front, side and curtain

airbags, ABS, electronic stability programme, brake assist, LED daytime running lights, projection headlights, electric door mirrors (heated on Excite and Exclusive models) and cruise control.

Higher grade versions also have automatic air conditioning, rear parking radar and camera, alloy wheels, front fog lights and roof rails.

With the move away from diesel cars in favour of petrol, MG's value for money price structure and a brand new car engineered and designed for Western European markets, the ZS does indeed represent a new era for the company.

It's a car aimed at the retail buyer rather than the big fleets which helps to explain the pricing and specific finance packages, and that's something of a rarity in these days when the list prices of some models are pitched at a higher level due to the necessity of giving big discounts to hard negotiators buying in bulk are a fact.

The ZS has the right ingredients to join the MG3 as one of the brand's most familiar sights on our roads.

Toyota close to 'game-changing' batteries for EVs



Solid-state batteries not too far away

Next-generation electric vehicle batteries are just a few years away from entering production, according to Toyota.

The Japanese car giant has revealed that it could have solid-state batteries, which are considered the next step to making electric vehicles (EVs) more affordable and usable, ready for production vehicles "sometime in the early 2020s".

Toyota executive vice-president Didier Leroy made the revelation as part of a wider speech on the company's future. He explained that although the company doesn't have any pure EVs yet, "we have no doubt that EVs will be one of the key solutions in the near future."

He said: "We have invested in advanced battery research for a very long time, and we believe our solid-state battery technology can be a game-changer with the potential to dramatically improve driving range."

"We are the leader in the field in terms of intellectual property, and currently we have more than 200 engineers working hard to be able to commercialise this technology sometime in the early 2020s."

Solid-state batteries replace the liquid found in traditional batteries with a solid material. The advantage of this is that the battery becomes more energy dense, so it can be smaller. It's also cheaper because fewer raw materials are needed, can charge more quickly and generates less heat. However, finding a solid material that can effectively store energy at the same levels of existing liquid-based lithium-ion batteries has long proved a stumbling block. In September, Toyota created a new technology company in collaboration with fellow car manufacturer Mazda and automotive component maker Denso to work on EV technology.

Swansong farewell edition launched for iconic WRX STI



The WRX STI is the iconic Subaru model; the modern incarnation of yesteryear's Impreza, conjuring images of special stage success and rallying legends pushing to the limit. This week, Subaru launched the WRX STI Final Edition, strictly limited to 150 models to say farewell to this brand icon and mark the end of this era of Subaru's heritage.

With the launches of new models, and investment in platform and powertrains going forward, the timing has felt right to open a new chapter for Subaru and allow WRX STI's heritage to inform future developments rather than being continued.

The Final Edition has a series of upgrades across key areas of the car, making this the most capable WRX STI sold in the UK and fitting tribute to its legacy.

Driving performance has been improved by changing from mechanical and electronic to electronic control of the Multi-Mode Driver's Control Centre Differential

(DCCD) which provides optimum cornering ability. The wheel size has been increased to 19 inches to house new larger Brembo® brakes with yellow painted calipers, which improve fade-resistance and brake performance and a consistent pedal feel when driving on the limit.

The front bumper has been redesigned to look more purposeful with the lower grille blacked out with a geometric textured panel, and has a larger opening to enhance cooling performance. The hexagonal grille has been sharpened and defined and a black surround has been added. The Subaru wing design which flows through to the C-shaped headlights has been incorporated, hinting at the Boxer engine under the bonnet. A Final Edition badge is positioned on the door.

Inside, high gloss black inserts are added to the instrument panel, gear stick surround, door panels and steering wheel with red stitching and red seatbelts

fitted to tie the scheme together. The front seats are now heated, and a larger 5.9" multi-function display has been added to the top of the dash. The instrument panel design has also been updated. The infotainment system now includes DAB radio and a reversing camera is included to make parking easier.

WRX STI is also fitted with bi-functional projector LED lights, with a single bulb enabling High Beam Assist to switch between high and low beam automatically. High Beam Assist operates via a single-lens camera, which is installed in the front windscreen and detects when an onward car is approaching. The lights are also steering responsive, turning to the left or right depending on the driver's steering input and illuminates more of the corner. Both technologies enhance visibility at night, allowing a clear view of the corners ahead.

The WRX STI Final Edition is available to order now, priced at £33,995 on the road.

All-new Hyundai Kona is on sale now from £16,195



There are high levels of standard technology and connectivity equipment

The all-new Kona follows on from the i30 family in offering a high level of standard safety equipment, with Driver Attention Alert, Lane Keeping Assist, Hill Start Assist Control and Downhill Brake Control featuring on all models. Premium SE adds Blind Spot Detection and Rear Cross Traffic Alert with Premium GT specification adding Autonomous Emergency Braking. High levels of standard technology and connectivity equipment also feature with all models of Kona benefitting from DAB and Bluetooth regardless of trim level.

Prices will start from £16,195 for the Kona S 1.0 T-GDI 120PS 6 speed manual, with external features including 16" alloy wheels, body coloured bumpers, door handles and door mirrors, as well as rear spoiler with integrated LED brake light. Interior equipment includes cloth seats with driver's seat height adjustment and 60/40 split folding rear seat. S trim level also features air conditioning with rear air vents, automatic headlamps with LED positioning lamps and LED daytime running lamps. Convenience features on S trim include standard cruise control with speed limiter, electrically adjustable and heated door mirrors and electric front and rear windows. DAB and Bluetooth connectivity features as standard throughout the range, with the S featuring a 5" LCD centre console display, six speakers, USB and AUX connections and steering wheel controls for audio, telephone and cruise control operation. A drivers supervision instrument cluster with 3.5" LCD multifunction screen rounds off the Kona S trim level.



The car is attractive and stands out

From £17,495 the Kona SE 1.0 T-GDI 120PS manual has additional external equipment including 17" alloy wheels, roof rails and fog lamps. Additional SE interior equipment includes leather wrapped steering wheel and gear knob and electric driver's seat lumbar support. SE comes as standard with a parking system including rear parking sensors and rear camera, with 7" touchscreen centre console display including smart device integration with Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™.

Moving further up the range, the Kona Premium 1.0 T-GDI 120PS manual at £18,795 continues with SE specification, with external changes including 18" alloy wheels, chrome surround to the black front grille, Anthracite finished side body garnish, and silver rear skid plate and side body mouldings. Premium trim also introduces climate control with automatic defog function, automatically dimming rear view mirror, automatic windscreen wipers and solar glass to the front windows and windscreen, with privacy glass to the rear windows and tailgate glass. Convenience features at this specification adds Smart Key with keyless entry and engine start/stop button and back storage pockets to both driver and passenger seats and luggage storage net. Kona Premium also sees the introduction of the high end KRELL premium audio system, including an eight speaker system with external amplifier and subwoofer. The KRELL is controlled via an 8" touchscreen centre console display with satellite navigation and LIVE services, Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™.

The Premium SE 1.0 T-GDI 120PS at £21,195, builds on the Premium specification by adding leather seat facings, with electrically adjustable driver and passenger seats, which also both offer seat heating and ventilation. Further additions include heated steering wheel, rear centre arm rest, power folding door mirrors and front parking sensors. New for Kona the Premium SE introduces the Head Up Display. Displayed information is customisable.

The top of the range Premium GT 1.6 T-GDI 177PS 7 speed DCT 4WD trim enters the range at £24,995 and offers additional equipment, including full LED headlamps with High Beam Assist and static bending function, as well as LED rear tailamps, a drivers supervision instrument cluster with 4.2" LCD multifunction screen. Kona Premium GT also adds the Safety Pack which includes Autonomous Emergency Braking with pedestrian recognition.

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Setting new standard for luxury SUVs

By Jack Evans

Those looking to purchase a Range Rover used to have three main options. The Evoque, representing the more affordable end of the spectrum, the Sport, which sat in the middle and the standard Range Rover at the very top. Now, there's one more car in the family – the Velar. Designed to sit in between the Evoque and Sport, it's a mid-sized SUV for those who want a little more space and a little more luxury.

Featuring an all-new Touch Pro Duo infotainment system which comprises of two high-definition 10.2-inch touchscreens and fitted with Range Rover's latest tech, it's the most cutting-edge car that the brand has ever put to market.

The front end of the Velar is unmistakable as that of a Range Rover, but with a twist. It features full Matrix LED headlights that are almost razor thin, sitting either side of a large, prominent grille. A side look at the profile of the Velar reveals it to be rather raked, though it still incorporates a 'floating roof' design as seen on other cars in the range.

The extremely short overhang at the front is contrasted by quite a large one at the rear which, in our eyes, can make it appear a touch dumpy. That said, the door handles which electronically retract to become flush with the car's bodywork are an extremely neat touch, and it all works together to create a car that looks more like a concept rather than a vehicle that you can actually go out and buy.

Inside, the cabin is dominated by Range Rover's new Touch Pro Duo infotainment system. The dual 10.2-inch touchscreens give easy access to navigation, media and phone functions via the top monitor, or climate

control settings and driving mode selections through the lower one. It's a system which is just as good to use as to look at, and represents a huge step forward for the brand over its existing offerings.

To achieve in the SUV segment, any car needs to be practical. The boot space, for example, is impressive. There's 632 litres of boot space to be found with the rear seats raised, rising to 1,731 litres with them folded flat. It's a huge load area, and because it's square in size it is very useable. The Velar is quite a high car, which does mean that lugging heavier items into the boot could be more of a challenge, but there's not much of load lip which makes things a little easier.

The cabin's airy nature means that it does feel spacious overall, while soft-touch materials and well-padded seats make it a comfortable place to be.

The Velar, as mentioned earlier, is designed to sit in between the Evoque and Sport in the product line-up, and as such you'd expect it to drive perhaps not quite as keenly as the car above it, but offer more involvement than the one below it. However, the first thing that strikes you when you get behind the wheel – and before you've even started the engine – is just how vast the Velar feels. It's near impossible to see the very front of the car, and this can be a little disconcerting to begin with.

After selecting 'D' on the car's rotary gear controller, the Velar – fitted with the turbocharged V6 diesel in our test car – pulls away cleanly and responds with more than enough urgency for a car of this size. The eight-speed dual-clutch gearbox shifts without any fuss, and you can take manual control of switching cogs via the steering wheel-mounted paddles should you want to –



The front end is unmistakable as that of a Range Rover, but with a twist. It features full Matrix LED headlights that are almost razor thin

though most drivers are likely to forget these in daily driving and leave the gearbox in all-auto mode. The impressive 700Nm of torque on tap makes for swift and easy overtaking, and means that the Velar never feels out of puff, even on extremely steep gradients.

The steering feels somewhat distant to begin with due to its relative lightness, but you soon become used to it. There's not a huge amount of feel, but it's not a hard car to place to on the road. Our car was a HSE model and came fitted with the turbocharged

V6 diesel, air suspension, and rode on 21-inch alloy wheels. We also tested a First Edition-specification car – limited to the first year of production – and the ride was noticeably firmer on this model's larger 22-inch alloys – we'd recommend choosing the smaller wheel as it does wonders for the overall ride quality.

The Velar is also nothing short of exceptional when it comes to tackling tricky conditions. It's fitted with the latest Terrain Response system, and it allowed the car to scramble up incredibly steep gradients, as well as handle all manner

of slippery surfaces. If left in full Auto terrain mode, it'll happily tackle almost anything – even when on standard road tyres. If you're looking for a car for all conditions, then the Velar is the car to go for.

Prices for the Velar start at £44,830 and can go as high as £85,450 for top-spec First Edition cars. The middle range cars offer excellent value for money as they come fitted with a good amount of standard equipment, and enough luxuries to keep even the most avid button-pusher happy.

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Swansong farewell edition launched for iconic WRX STI

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The hexagonal grille has been sharpened and defined and a black surround has been added. The Subaru wing design which flows



The front bumper has been redesigned to look more purposeful

through to the C-shaped headlights has been incorporated, hinting at the Boxer engine under the bonnet. A Final Edition badge is positioned on the door.

Inside, high gloss black inserts are added to the instrument panel, gear stick surround, door panels and steering wheel with red stitching and red seatbelts fitted to tie the scheme together.

The front seats are now heated, and a larger 5.9" multi-function display has been added to the top of the dash.

The instrument panel design has also been updated. The infotainment system now includes DAB radio and a reversing camera is included to make parking easier.

WRX STI is also fitted with bi-functional projector LED lights, with a single bulb enabling High Beam Assist to switch between high and low beam automatically.

High Beam Assist operates via a single-lens camera, which is installed in the front windscreen and detects when an onward car is approaching. The lights are also steering responsive, turning to the left or right depending on the driver's steering input and illuminates more of the corner.

Both technologies enhance visibility at night, allowing a clear view of the corners ahead.

The WRX STI Final Edition is available to order now, priced at £33,995 on the road.



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4 Pets & Animals

Pets Corner

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5 Business & Farming

business directory

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6

Property

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7

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8

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£3,800
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9 Local Information

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(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

10 Personals

Personal

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GEORGINA, 46yrs, sophisticated professional lady (teacher), quite firm but kind! Interested in finding out more? I am interested to chat to you so call me today. Text Only. Box: 4151593

JANE, 49yrs, own home, loves nature, artistic. Love to socialise. WLTm gent any age, must have GSOH. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429165

ANGELA, 48yrs, seeks no strings casual fun. I have my own house, car and am solvent. I'm busy with a firm figure. You must be open minded, age/status unimportant. Tel: 0906 515 3015 Box: 427633

NANCY, 40 something years young. Attractive, fun loving and kind. Hoping to meet gent for trips, particularly around Cornwall which I love. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429037

AMANDA, 36yrs, attractive lady. Solvent and well educated and spoken. Feminine figure with large breasts. Hoping to meet a broad minded gent, any age for discreet relationship. I don't mind if you are married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box: 429287

EMILY, 46yrs, attractive professional lady with time on her hands. Hoping to meet a nice gent of any age, text fun, flirt, possible meeting. Text Only. Box: 4126579

ELIZABETH, 45, fed up with lonely nights! Blonde blue eyed, no children, WLTm someone for chit chats in and TLC. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429221

SARAH black lady, works as a nurse, 48yrs young, hoping to meet a younger man for some fun. Let me be your cougar and dress me up in my uniform. Text Only. Box: 4166063

SHARON, 48, tall slim attractive, lives alone with no ties, love romanticising and WLTm man for good times together, maybe more. Any age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429125

MELANIE, attractive lady, 38yrs, hoping to meet a nice chap, any age, for chats, non complicated times. Must have great soul, looks unimportant. Text Only. Box: 4037147

ATTRACTIVE lady, 70yrs young, slim, fit and young for my age. I'm hoping to meet a kind gent, must have GSOH, age/looks unimportant. Must be smart and good company. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429039

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FEMALE 67, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out in, looking for male 68-75 for friendship maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5877942

YAZ, Asian lady, 32yrs, very slim and pretty. Hoping to meet a strong minded, dominant, resourceful man. Mature please 45+ Text Only. Box: 4177148

SUE, 44, country loving lady, tall, slim, looking for similar country gent to share adventures in the great outdoors with. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429251

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters please. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715

LINDA, 61, attractive, looking for a good man who is loving, tactile and sensitive. Can you put the spring back in my step? Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429085

I am Caroline, 37. If you fancy a chat, are tall, dark and handsome, give this tall, fit female a call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428943

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375

KATHLEEN, attractive lady, 58yrs. Blue-eyed brunette with varied interests. I love life and want a nice gent to share it with me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429047

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365

SYLVIA, 44yrs, curvy busty build. Very respectful. Hoping to meet a good man to love. Call to hear more, I've lots to tell you. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429045

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205

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CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533

ATTRACTIVE lady, 44yrs, easygoing, solvent with OHAC. If you are down to earth and loving call me. Age/looks unimportant. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429041

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979

PAULINE, Sincere lady, 70s, GSOH, OH&C. Curvy with shoulder length dark hair. Varied interests, theatre and travel. WLTm similar minded gent. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428977

VALERIE, caring thoughtful lady. Attractive with GSOH. Seeking similar gent. ACA. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429163

MARIELLE, 45yrs, curvy attractive lady, likes older men. I'm married so you must be discreet. Lets meet up, and make each other smile again. Call me and lets get to know each other. Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box: 426853

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KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673

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DERBY male, young 57, looking for uncared, unloved married woman looking for discreet adult fun 35-55. Txt me for a good time. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5321154

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MALE would like to meet local female 50/60 for mutual friendship. I'm easygoing and have many interests. Text only replies. Mailbox: 5071056

COLIN 72, from Burntwood, looking for loving lady for days out, holidays and company. Text only replies. Mailbox: 4880436

MALE, 20s, seeks NSA fun with female. I love a laugh, age isn't important. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6042304

MALE 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or Asian lady, any age for adult fun, maybe more. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6010228

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SINGLE dad, tall, blonde hair, good looking, keeps fit, loves the cinema, meals out, looking for a single lady for date nights. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428163

ATTRACTIVE male, 56, 6ft, WLTm an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109

Hi I am a single Indian male in my 50s, and would like to meet a mature female 55+ for a NSA friendship. Text only replies. Box no: 4627019

WALSALL male, looking for no strings lady of any nationality, colour or age. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428773

MALE, age 68, very active looking for lady for NSA fun. Can accommodate. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026972

EASYGOING likeable man likes a drink at the pub, and nights in front of the telly and a cuddle, looking for lady 45-55. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6066059

JACK 23, single, tall, young looking guy, kind and respectful, seeking female age/looks not important for mutual NSA fun. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026038

MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714

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I am Caroline, 37. If you fancy a chat, are tall, dark and handsome, give this tall, fit female a call. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428943

JANE, 47, confident full figured and all woman, likes cosy nights in with that special person, looking for friendship maybe more. Age/looks unimportant. Tel: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428905

ATTRACTIVE lady, young looking 70s, retired nurse, hoping to find a nice gent for cinema, wining, dining, lives pleasures. I'm very kind and miss a mans pleasures. Please contact me. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428971

Single Men

TALL, dark, attractive Shropshire male, 57, WLTm an attractive female, for discreet daytime fun and excitement. Any age or status. Can travel. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 429301

COLIN, 50, kind, loving, seeks kind loving, cuddly, large lady, 45-55, for LTR, love and romance. Must like hugs, kisses, cuddles and holding hands. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6091169

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings etc. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175

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MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714

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Steve Bull and chairman Dave Maydew with Olivia Green, Ella Green, Liam Bailey and Olivia Grainger



Diane Cook, James Newman, chairman Maydew and Rebecca Harris at the opening of the new pavilion



Inside the Bilbrook Juniors' changing rooms



The impressive £850,000 development

New facilities enable life to begin at 40 for club

SPORTING FEATURE

By Matt Maher

"We had to put our case forward. At times it felt like we were moving one step forward and then two back."

THE building of an £850,000 new facility has a football club believing they can prove life begins at 40.

Bilbrook Juniors fielded their first team back in 1978 and will next year enter the fifth decade stronger than ever thanks the new state-of-the-art pavilion at their Pendeford Lane home which features changing rooms, a clubhouse and bar.

Constructed with the aid of grants from the Premier League, the FA and Wolverhampton City Council, it has club members hailing a new dawn.

"The club has been in existence for nearly 40 years but in many ways this is the starting point," said chairman Dave Maydew.

Reality

"Having a facility like this has been a long-term goal and it has taken the hard work of too many people to mention in order to make it a reality.

"But in many ways the big job starts now. Until now all the money has gone into keeping the club going. Now we are in a position where we can start giving back."

The new facility is the result of a decade-long campaign and replaces the club's previous clubhouse, which had fallen into a state of disrepair.

It was made possible thanks to a £484,529 grant from the Premier League & The FA Facilities Fund, which is delivered by the Football Foundation. Wolverhampton City Council also contributed £350,000



Bilbrook Juniors Under-11s East are one of the many teams to wear the club colours

to the project. "We had to put our case forward. It wasn't a simple or easy process and at times it felt like we were moving one step forward and then two back," said Maydew.

"But the end result is more than worth it. I would love to be able to list all the people who have helped us out along the way but quite frankly it would take up two pages of the newspaper.

"We are all volunteers, no-one getting paid a penny. "We do it because we love it. I joined the club 22 years ago when my son started playing aged five.

"Before then I used to play football myself. Now I feel like I am giving something back.

"It's been a real team effort and means we can now move onto the next phase."

The new facility, at a ground which features two full-sized pitches and four-mini pitches, was opened last month by Wolves legend Steve Bull.

Complete with two referee's changing rooms and a kitchen, along with spectator toilets with disabled access, it is expected to increase participation at a club

which already fields 31 teams at all age levels in a variety of regional leagues, including a ladies team.

In total Bilbrook have around 1,500 members including players, coaches and volunteers.

Future plans will see the construction of floodlights which should allow Bilbrook's mens team, who currently play in Division One of the West Midlands League, to further climb the non-league pyramid.

The facility is also set to benefit both the community and other clubs. Otter and Vixen FC and Gornal Colts will also use the site, while Wolves Community Trust are set to deliver training and community outreach programmes.

"It is not just for the club but for the community too, particularly for the children," said Maydew. "There is now a facility which can host functions. The old clubhouse was a drain on us. No-one wanted to go in but we were still paying for the gas and the electric.

"That is money which can now be reinvested into the club and help us build toward the future.

"In many ways this feels like a new beginning."

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Yeltz defeat sees Pics on the rise

Rushall Olympic 3 Halesowen Town 1
GOALS from Richard Brodie, Wes Atkinson and Mathis Fonovich were enough to give Rushall Olympic three valuable points against Evo-Stik League Premier Division relegation rivals Halesowen Town at Dales Lane.

After a quiet start to the game, Jahquill Hill kept the Yeltz at bay with a fantastic save from Danny Udoh on 33 minutes after the forward got in behind the home defence.

Brodie carried on where he left off by converting his second penalty in three games after being fouled inside the area by Asa Charlton on 38 minutes. The striker sent Danny Platt the wrong way to put Rushall into the lead.

The Yeltz got an instant reply, with Udoh sliding in to nip the ball past Hill after a precise through ball found him 10 yards out on 41 minutes.

Pinpoint

The Pics were back in front three minutes later, when a pinpoint Danny Waldron cross from the right found Atkinson, who nodded home from close range.

Fonovich doubled the Pics' lead on 61 minutes with a fine finish. The Frenchman received the ball on the edge of the area before curling a sublime effort into the top corner to make it 3-1.

The Pics' defence stood strong for the rest of the game, with the Yeltz struggling to get a foothold as Rushall protected their lead manfully until full-time.

"It was a scrappy game," admitted Olympic manager Liam McDonald. "We knew what they would come with in terms of being a threat from set-pieces and on the counter attack."

"I was pleased with how hard we worked against a team who had good shape."

"We were not so great in the first half but after the break we were the better side and deserved the win."

Sibling success at the aquathlon

AT the weekend some of the Black Country Triathlete juniors came home with medals at the Burntwood Aquathlon.

It was a family effort for both the girls and boys. Sisters Scarlett and Sydney Williams both came home in first place in the TS1 and TS3 age groups and brothers Ben and Tom Lucas finished 3rd and 5th in the TS2 age group.

There was one adult entry from BCT with Lucy McNeil-Briggs finishing in 33:39 following a 7:44 400m swim and a 25:25 5km run placing her fifth in the Open Age group.

Other club athletes are preparing themselves for the annual BCT Splash n'Dash aquathlon which will be held on December 3 at Ounsdale Leisure Centre, Wombourne. Entries are open on line at www.entrycentral.co.uk for both adults and juniors.

Trophies roll in for Great Barr youngsters



Trophy winner Matt

TWO teenage members of Great Barr Golf Club are enjoying a very successful year.

Their performances have delighted club officials who predict a bright future in the game for Ellis Muckley and Matt Sheldon, both 17, writes Paul Marston.

Muckley, a former student at Wood Green Academy, is from Wednesbury, plays off a handi-

cap of two, and is currently attending the Lee Westwood Golf Academy in Cheshire, five days a week. Highlight of his year came recently when he won Great Barr's main Championship, shooting 77 and 71 in the two rounds, then clinching the title after a three-hole play-off against two adult members of the club.

Sheldon, from Streetly, is

studying at Streetly Academy, and, playing off a handicap of five, he recently won the Staffs County Junior Order of Merit after a sudden death play-off against another young Great Barr member, Dan Taylor.

He also captained the Staffordshire under-16 Boys to victory in the annual Midland 10 Counties Cup, which was played at Great Barr.



Ellis Muckley with

ADAMS BOOTS DK TO VICTORY

27 Lutterworth 59 Dudley Kingswinford
THE game was barely two minutes old when DK had their first attack, releasing left-wing Luke Trevis for a run to the line and the first try to visitors DK.

The Leicestershire side drew a penalty on nine minutes to reduce the lead to 5-3.

Second-row Matt Perks broke the home side's line with a stretched out arm making the goal line, Nic Adams adding the conversion.

The Lutterworth pack were able to use a scrumage as a platform for a close range try with the conversion cutting the DK lead, 12-10.

A long speculative kick was fielded by DK full-back Adams, who ran the ball back through the Lutterworth team, before putting Stef Shillingford into space for a run in to the line. Adams added the conversion.

On 35 minutes DK were able to work their way into the Lutterworth half and a ruck on the 10 metre line saw Shillingford feeding Adams, who split the defence with a dummy and was through for a try which he converted himself, 26-10.

Break

A good passing move saw Luke Trevis in for his second try on the stroke on half time, so DK went into the break 31-10 up.

Lutterworth reduced the lead to 31-15 but, using the wind, DK were able to pin the home side into their 22 and forced mistakes. This led to two short range tries by the DK forwards through Sam Pedley and a second for Matt Perks; both converted by Adams, 45-15.

Ryan Smitheman was stopped by a good tackle but the ball was recycled and Shillingford was over for his second try, plus the extras from Adams, 52-15.

DK finished their scoring with a Jordan Brookes, Adams adding the extras, 59-15 to DK.

In the final 10 minutes Lutterworth scored two tries to get a bonus point, and make the final score a little more respectable for the home side.

Welsh triumph for rally driver



Wales Rally success for Richard Sykes, first of the front-wheel drive cars Picture by Jakob Ebrej

STOURBRIDGE'S Richard Sykes ended his rally season in style by finishing first of the front-wheel drive cars and 15th overall on the very tough Wales Rally GB National event.

They may have done better if not for some technical problems and stopping to check on a competitor whose car was on fire.

Sykes used his usual Bathams Brewery, The Body Clinic, Summit Platforms and G I Sykes Ltd-supported Citroën DS3 R3 on the event, which featured eight competitive stages over two days totalling 60 miles. The National event shared stages with the World Rally Championship event, running at the same time.

The first stage was at Cholmondeley Castle and the rally then moved into the forests.

Sykes said: "We managed to get an engineer from Citroën's World Rally Team to plug our car into their laptop to correct the electrical gremlins."

The car hit a hole which broke the power steering, so Sykes was forced to drive two full stages and 130 miles of road section without steering assistance.

A great effort by Sykes meant that the problem only cost them around 40 seconds which dropped them one place to 15th but still first of the front-wheel drive cars.

Keeper Gould earns a point for Glassboys

Stourbridge 0 Witton Albion 0
STOURBRIDGE boss Gary Hackett admitted he made tactical mistakes in the disappointing goalless draw against Witton Albion.

The Glassboys were below par and had Matt Gould to thank for getting a point from the game against a fellow Evo-Stik Premier play-off contender.

Last season's top scorer Luke Benbow returned to the club on a short-term loan from Solihull Moors on Friday but the Glassboys didn't pose much of a threat.

Hackett said: "I didn't get it right tactically. I make mistakes as a manager."

"Let's be honest, we were very poor. The only saving grace is that when you play as poorly as we did you make sure you don't lose the game."

Hackett's side did start reasonably well and their best opportunity of the game arrived in the ninth minute but Leon Broadhurst saw his shot blocked after good work down the left by Luke Shearer.

Gould was first called into action just after the half hour mark and the keeper did well to deny Owen Dale before Prince Haywood fired wide from distance.

Witton took control of the game after the interval and almost went ahead in the 50th minute but defender Nick Ryan's back-post header was kept out by Gould.

The shot-stopper, whose father Jonathan is goalkeeping coach at West Brom, then did brilliantly to get down to winger Steven Tames' low effort.

Gould was once again called into action, denying James Foley from close range with five minutes left, leaving the Glassboys thankful for a point.

Meanwhile, Stourbridge has banned a number of supporters from matches after flares were set off and thrown onto the pitch.

The club has taken tough action against several fans who blighted games against rivals Halesowen Town.

A woman was injured during a league game when a flare was thrown while there were more unsavoury scenes in a Birmingham Senior Cup tie two weeks later on October 23.

Stourbridge said in a statement: "Following investigations, we can confirm that a number of people have been refused entry to the War Memorial Ground at subsequent matches, and the club is in the process of formally notifying these people of indefinite bans from all future matches at the War Memorial Ground."

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